The Hard Goodbye **FRANK MILLER**

DARK HORSE BOOKS®

Publisher MIKE RICHARDSON
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Published by Dark Horse Books
A division of Dark Horse Comics, Inc.
10956 SE Main Street, Milwaukie, Oregon 97222
United States of America

darkhorse.com

Third Edition: September 2010
ISBN 978-1-59307-293-3

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed by Lake Books, Inc., Melrose Park, IL, U.S.A.

FRANK MILLER'S SIN CITY® VOLUME 1: THE HARD GOODBYE
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This volume collects stories originally published in issues fifty-one through sixty-two of the Dark Horse comic book series *Dark Horse Presents* and in the *Dark Horse Presents Fifth Anniversary Special*, originally edited by Randy Stradley.

For Lynn

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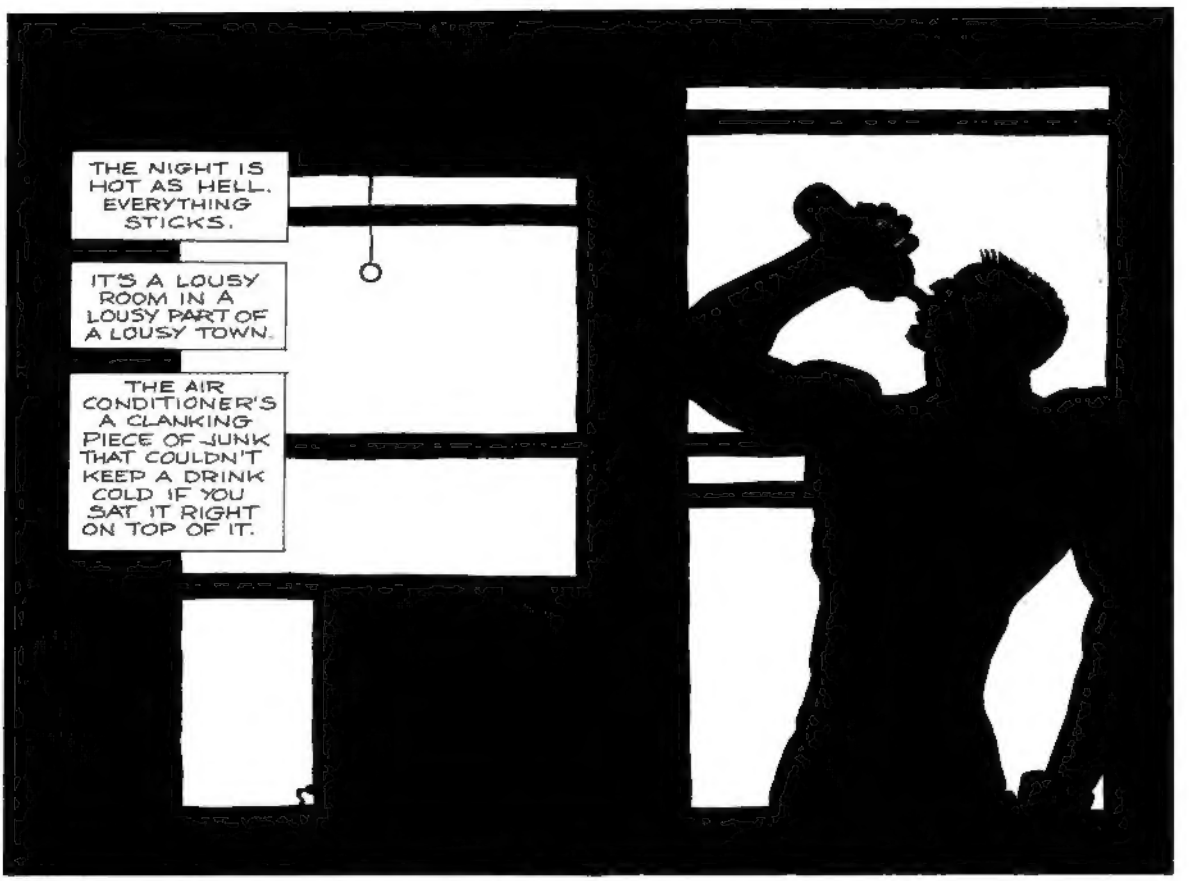
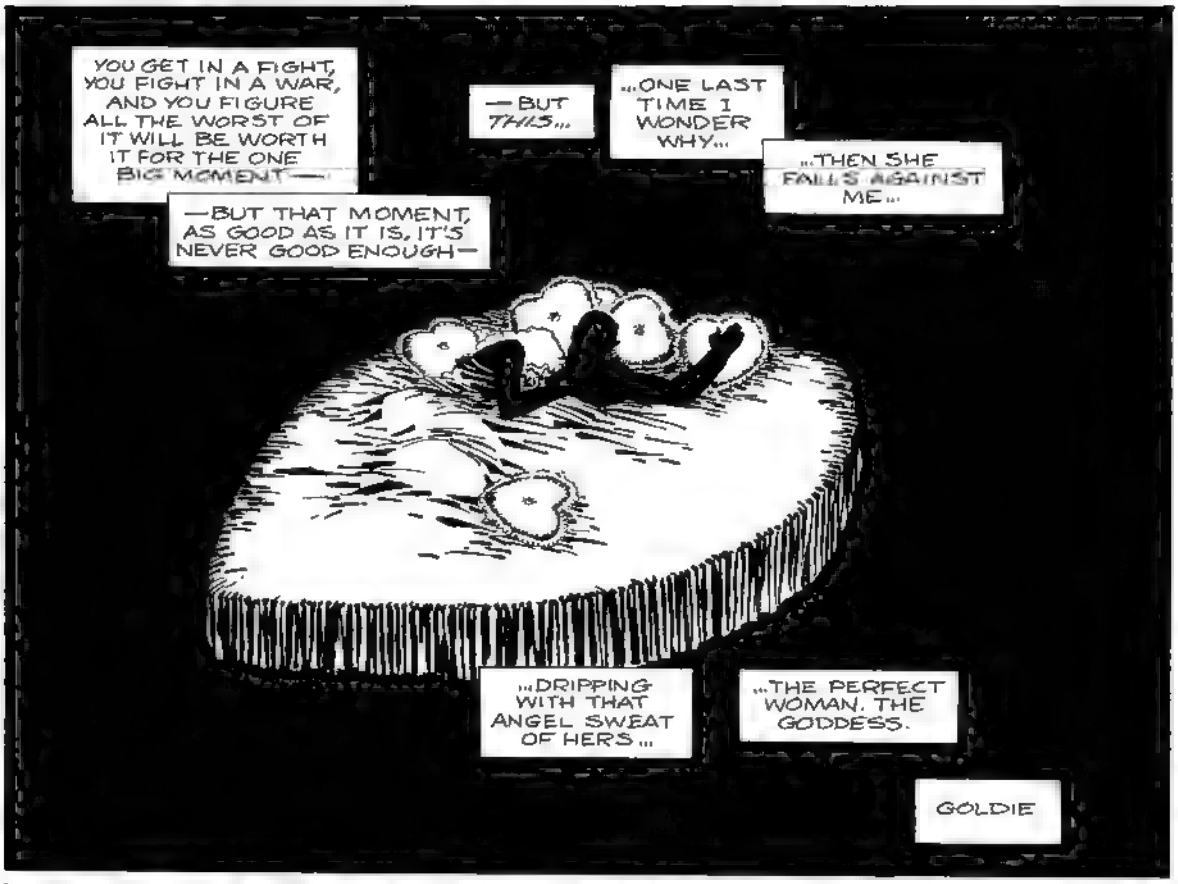
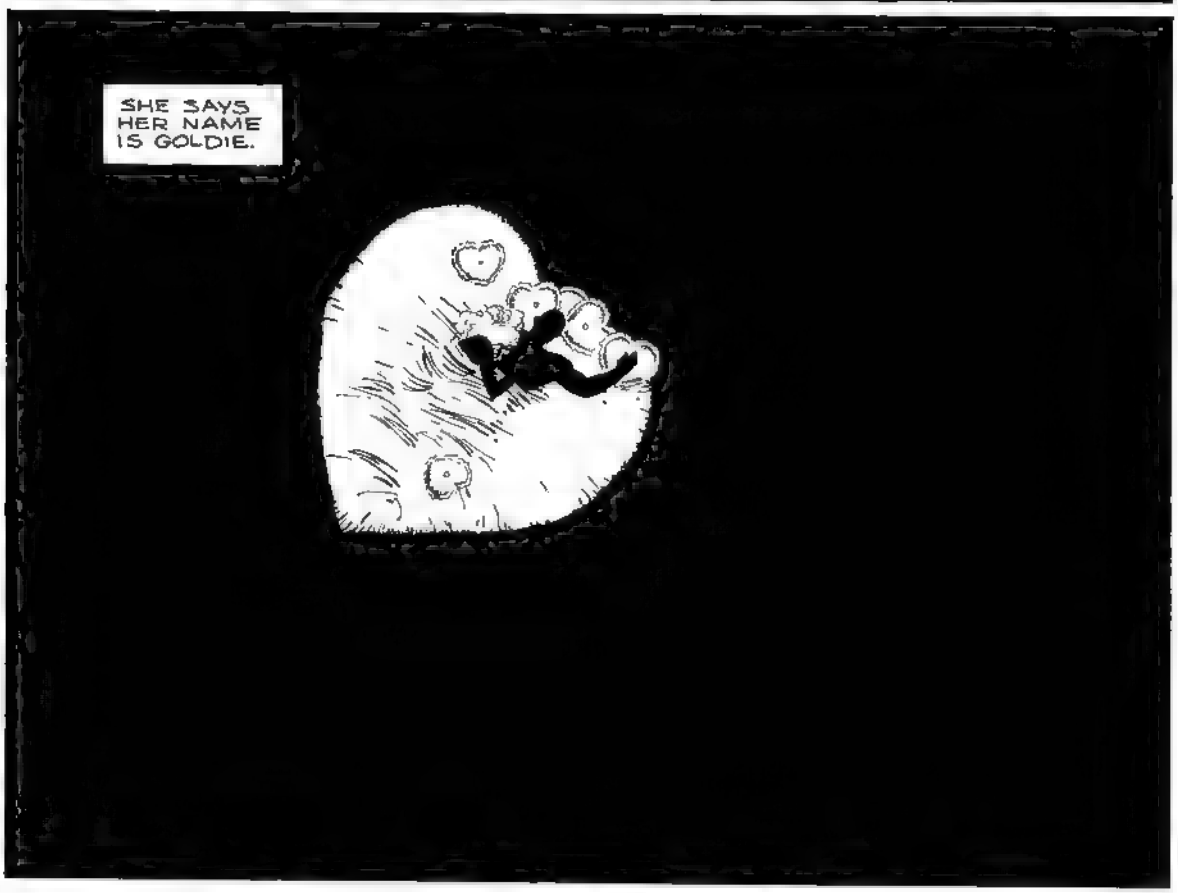
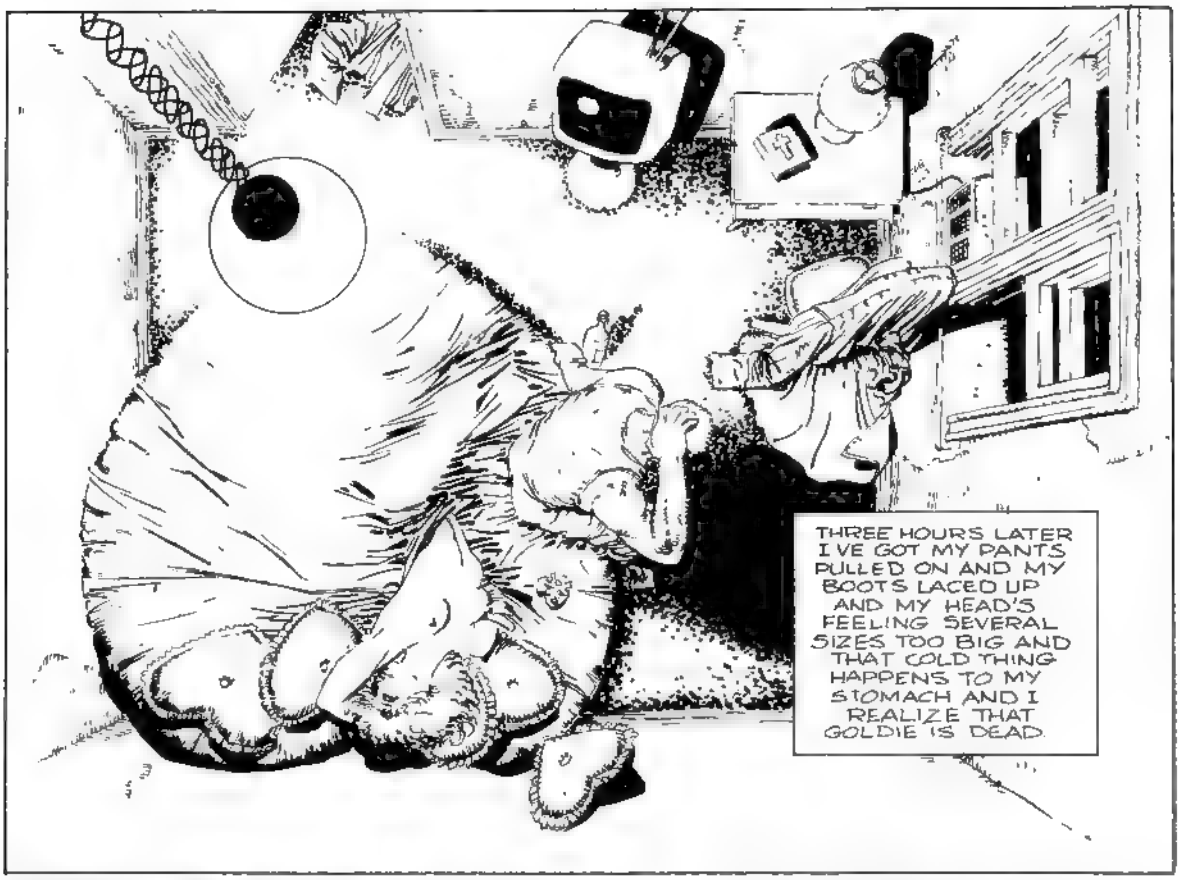

THE NIGHT IS HOT AS HELL. EVERYTHING STICKS.
IT'S A LOUSY ROOM IN A LOUSY PART OF A LOUSY TOWN.
THE AIR CONDITIONER'S A CLANKING PIECE OF JUNK THAT COULDN'T KEEP A DRINK COLD IF YOU SAT IT RIGHT ON TOP OF IT.

I'M STARING AT A GODDESS. SHE'S TELLING ME SHE WANTS ME.
SHE SOUNDS LIKE SHE MEANS IT.
I'M NOT GOING TO WASTE ONE MORE SECOND WONDERING HOW IT IS I'VE GOTTEN SO LUCKY.

SHE SMELLS LIKE ANGELS OUGHT TO SMELL.


YOU GET IN A FIGHT, YOU FIGHT IN A WAR, AND YOU FIGURE ALL THE WORST OF IT WILL BE WORTH IT FOR THE ONE BIG MOMENT—
—BUT THAT MOMENT, AS GOOD AS IT IS, IT'S NEVER GOOD ENOUGH—
—BUT THIS...
...ONE LAST TIME I WONDER WHY...
...THEN SHE FALLS AGAINST ME...
...DRIPPING WITH THAT ANGEL SWEAT OF HERS...
...THE PERFECT WOMAN. THE GODDESS.
GOLDIE


SHE SAYS HER NAME IS GOLDIE.


THREE HOURS LATER I'VE GOT MY PANTS PULLED ON AND MY BOOTS LACED UP AND MY HEAD'S FEELING SEVERAL SIZES TOO BIG AND THAT COLD THING HAPPENS TO MY STOMACH AND I REALIZE THAT GOLDIE IS DEAD.

NOT A MARK ON HER YOU'D HAVE TO CHECK HER PULSE OR NOTICE THOSE PERFECT BREASTS OF HERS AREN'T MOVING LIKE THEY WOULD IF SHE WAS BREATHING.
AND THERE'S NOTHING TELLING ME IT WASN'T JUST A HEART ATTACK IN HER SLEEP..
...NOTHING BUT THAT COLD THING IN MY GUT GETTING COLDER..

...AND IT'S BEEN TOO DAMNED MANY TIMES ACROSS TOO DAMNED MANY YEARS FOR ME TO EVEN QUESTION THAT FEELING
SHE WAS MURDERED AND I WAS RIGHT HERE WHEN IT HAPPENED, LYING NEXT TO HER, STONE DRUNK JUST LIKE SHE WAS
DAMN IT, GOLDIE. WHO WERE YOU AND WHO WANTED YOU DEAD?
WHO WERE YOU BESIDES AN ANGEL OF MERCY GIVING A TWO-TIME LOSER LIKE ME THE NIGHT OF HIS LIFE?
GOD KNOWS WHY. IT SURE AS HELL WASN'T MY LOOKS...
...NOT MY LOOKS OR ANYTHING ELSE ABOUT ME. DAMES WITHOUT A TENTH OF WHAT YOU HAD TO OFFER WRITE ME OFF AS THE MACHO PIG I AM.
SO WHY THAT SLEAZY SALOON? WHY THAT SLOW SMILE? WHY THE KINDNESS, GOLDIE?
WHY, I ASK NOW. BUT WHEN YOU GOT SCARED, WHEN YOU TREMBLED AND YOUR EYES WENT BIG AS A LITTLE GIRL'S, I DIDN'T ASK WHY, NOT THEN.
THEN, I DIDN'T GIVE A DAMN WHAT WAS BOTHERING YOU
ALL OF A SUDDEN SOMETHING OUTSIDE SCREAMS.
COMING THIS WAY

COPS... THEY'RE TELLING ME TOO MUCH, SHOWING UP BEFORE ANYBODY BUT ME AND THE KILLER COULD KNOW THERE'S BEEN A MURDER.
NO TIME TO HIDE
NO POINT IN PLAYING GOOD CITIZEN, EITHER. SIN CITY COPS HAVE HAD THEIR HANDS ON ME BEFORE THIS TIME THEY WON'T MAKE THE MISTAKE OF LETTING ME LIVE
DAMN...
NO REASON AT ALL TO PLAY IT QUIET.
NO REASON TO PLAY IT ANY WAY BUT MY WAY

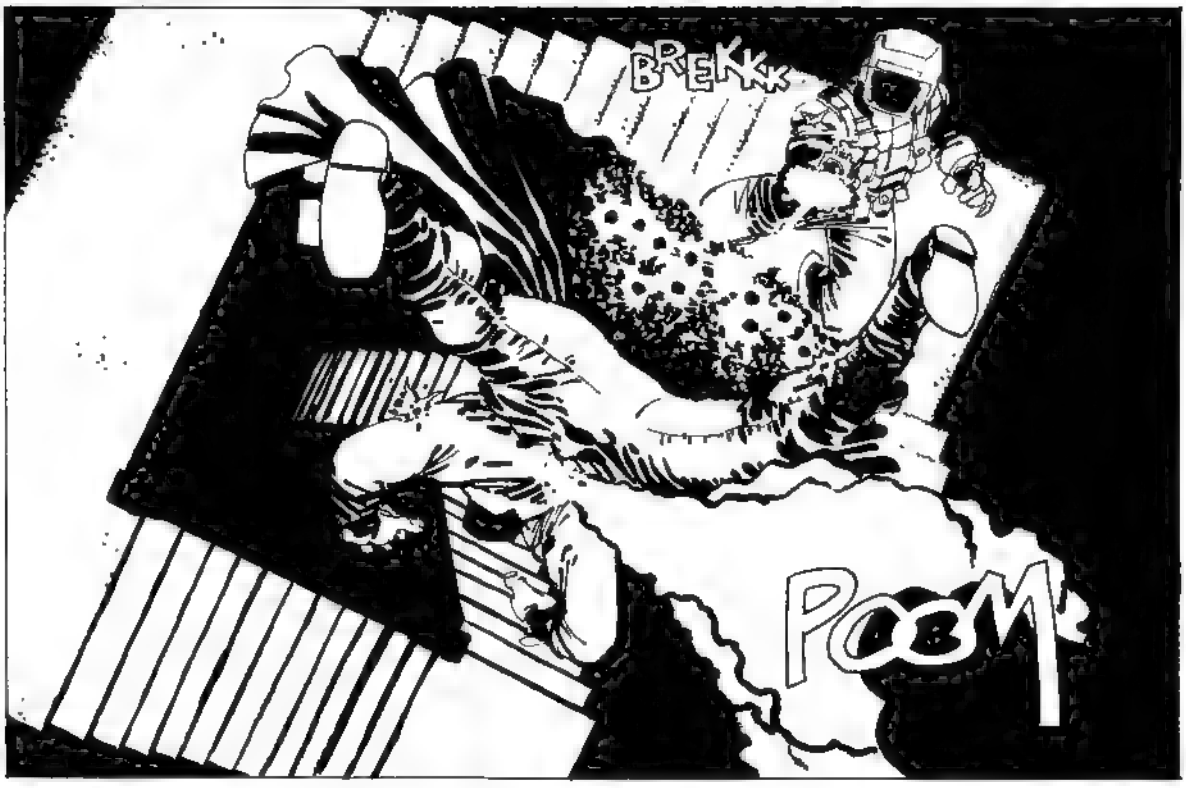
2

WE'RE SUPPOSED TO CALL THEM *COPS*--
--BUT EVERYBODY KNOWS WHO THEY'RE WORKING FOR AND WHAT IT TAKES TO KEEP THEM HAPPY
SOMEBODY PAID GOOD MONEY FOR THIS FRAME...

POK
GULP
OPEN UP! POLICE!
I'LL BE RIGHT OUT.

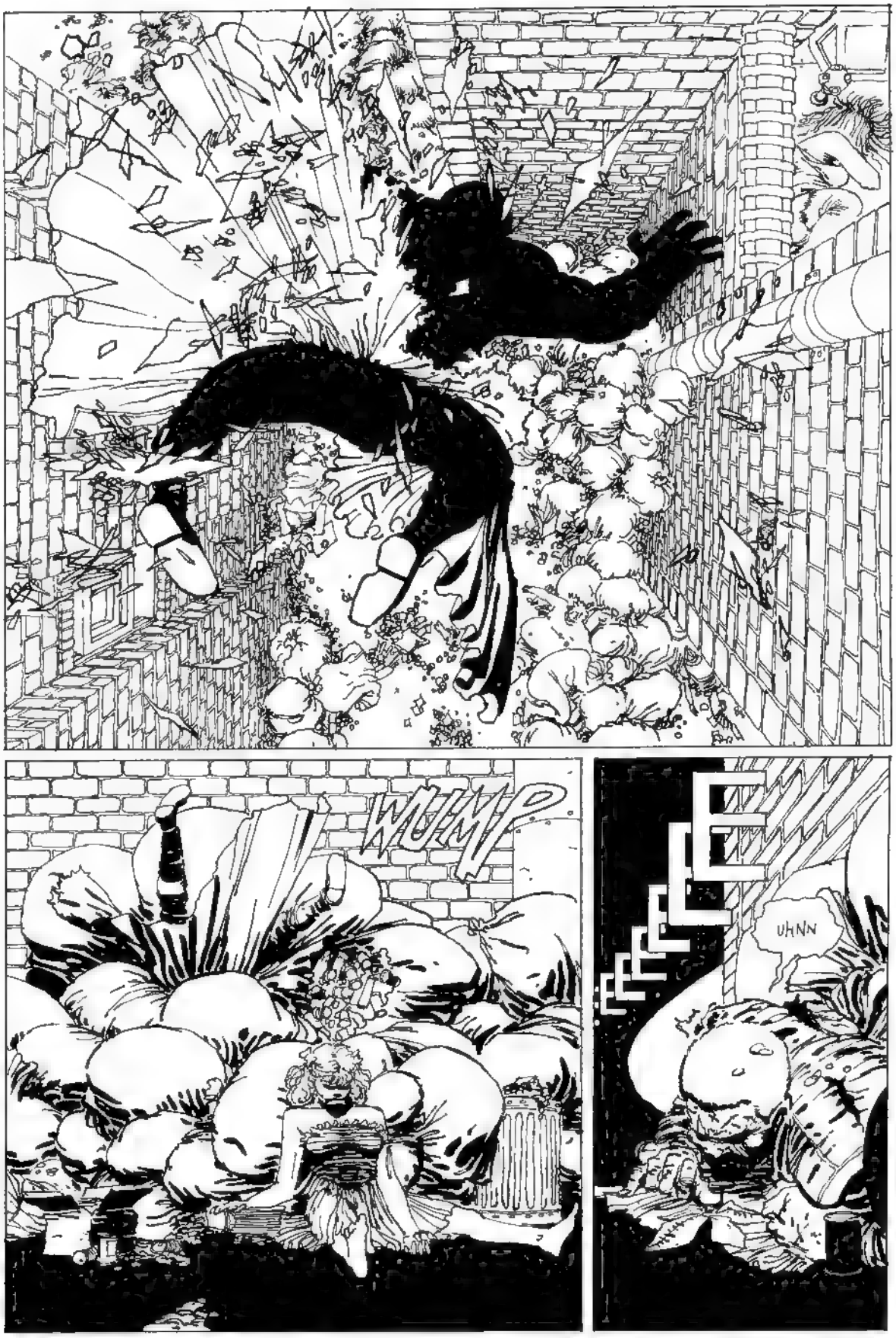
SKREKKK
OH NO
GRAA
HOOF
OK
GHAA
KUD
HUGG
POW

POOM

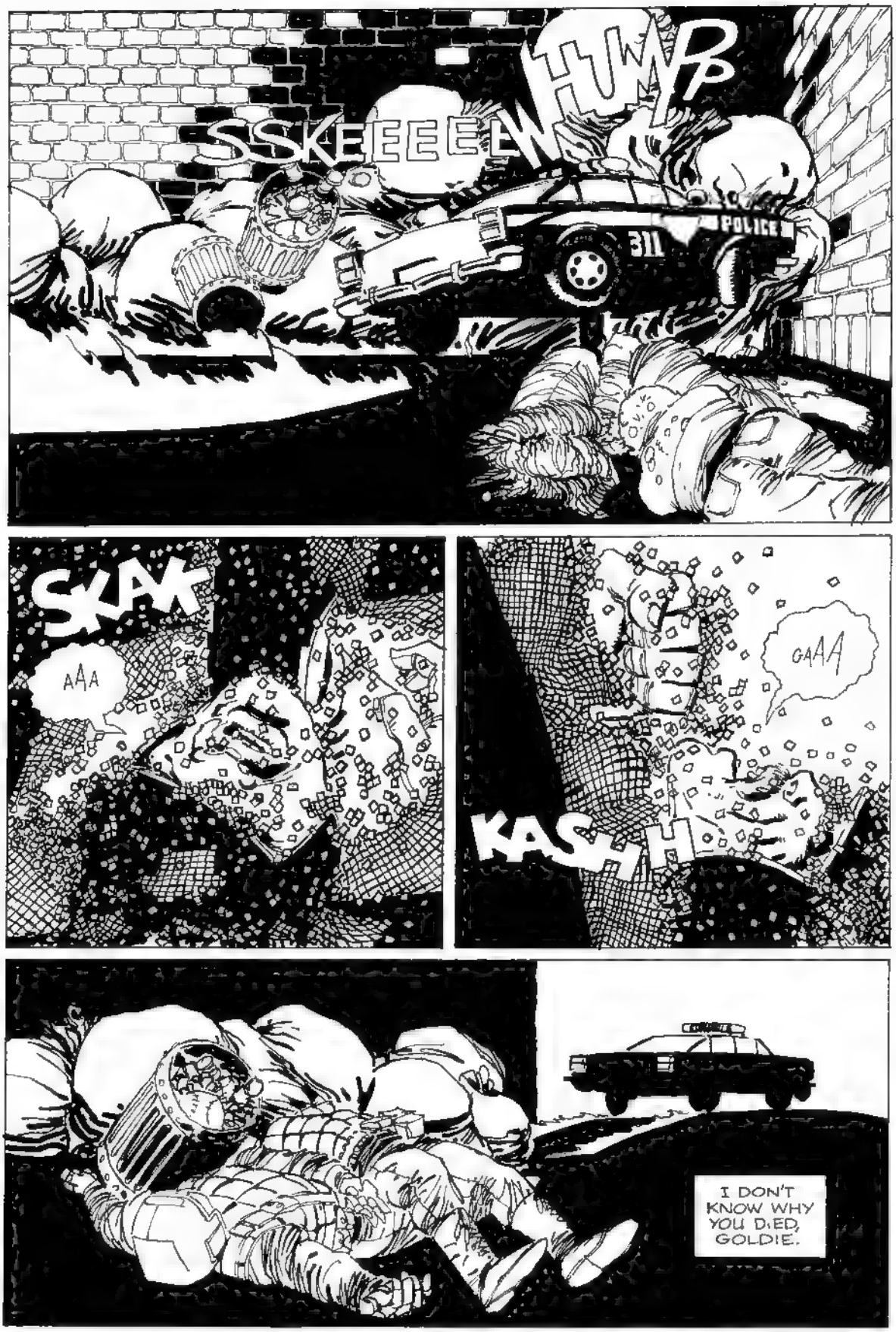

BREKK
POOM

POOM
NUFF
SPAK
POOM POOM
GNAA
SPAK
HUFF
PUMP
UP THERE..
BLAM

KASHH


WUMP
UHNN

EEEEEEE
HEFF
POLICE
311
UNFF
POLICE
SKAK


SSKEEEEEW
THUMP
POLICE
311
SKAK
AAA
GAAA
KASH
I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU DIED, GOLDIE.

I DON'T KNOW WHY AND I DON'T KNOW HOW AND HELL I NEVER EVEN MET YOU BEFORE TONIGHT BUT YOU WERE A FRIEND AND MORE WHEN I NEEDED ONE AND WHEN I FIND OUT WHO DID IT IT WON'T BE QUICK OR QUIET LIKE IT WAS WITH YOU.
NO, IT'LL BE LOUD AND NASTY, MY KIND OF KILL.
I'LL STARE THE BASTARD IN THE FACE AND LAUGH AS HE SCREAMS TO GOD AND I'LL LAUGH HARDER WHEN HE WHIMPERS LIKE A BABY.
AND WHEN HIS EYES GO DEAD THE HELL I SEND HIM TO WILL SEEM LIKE HEAVEN AFTER WHAT I'VE DONE TO HIM
I LOVE YOU, GOLDIE.

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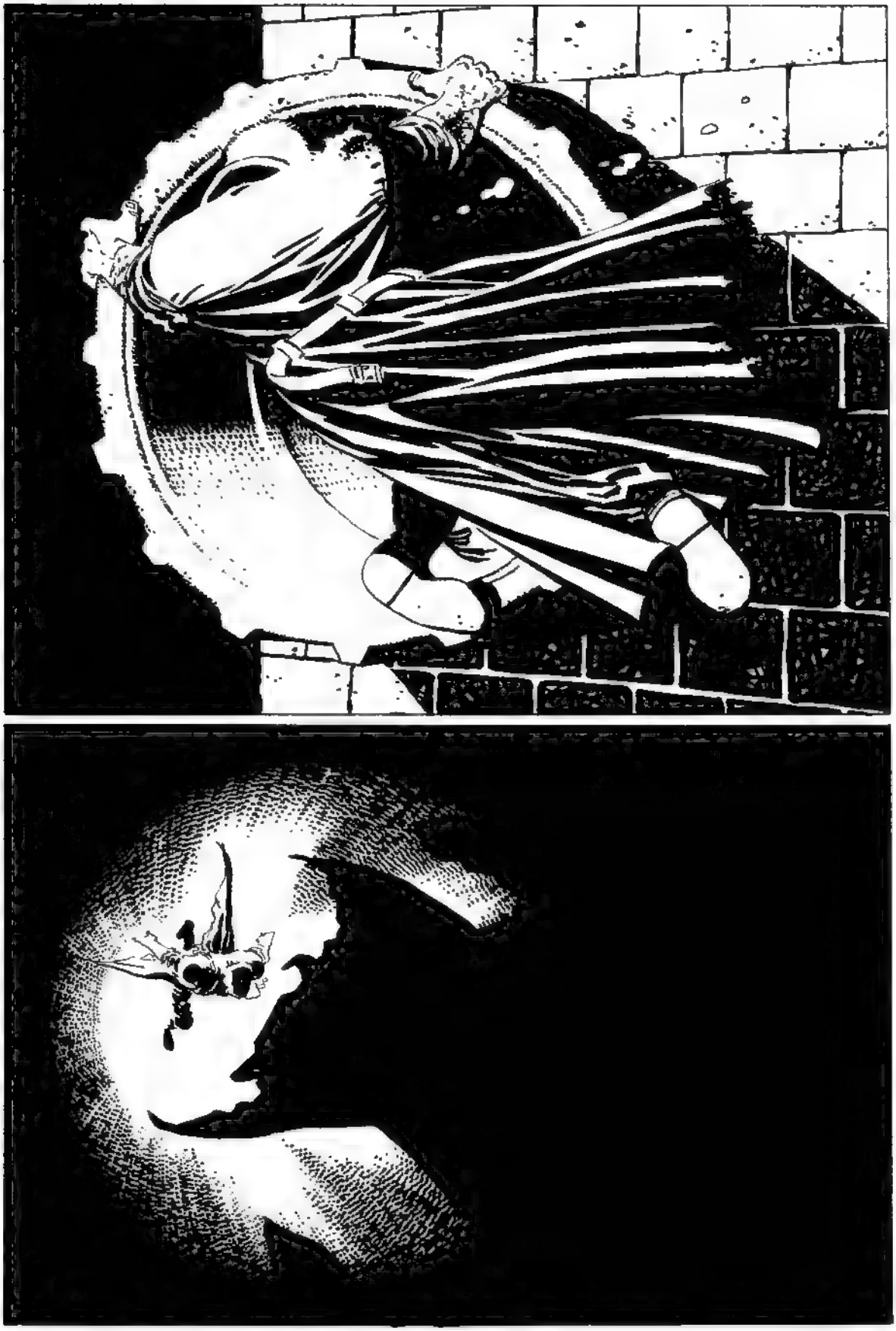
BY NOW THERE'S TWO DOZEN COPS UP ON THE PIER, GUNS COCKED, WAITING FOR ME TO SURFACE SO THEY CAN BLAST MY FACE TO KINGDOM COME.
I HOPE THEY'RE HOLDING THEIR BREATH, THE BASTARDS...



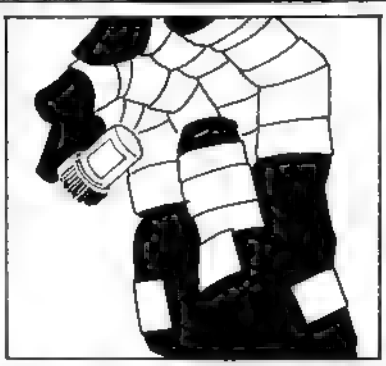
HHHAKK
KHOFF
BASTARDS...
BASTARDS. SHOWED THEM
KOFF
I HAVE TO GET TO LUCILLE.
SHE KNOWS WHAT I NEED AND SHE'S GOT IT
SHE'S ALWAYS GOT IT.

UFF

WHUFF

FUMPp
HNF?
CLAIRE?

CHIKK
KOFF
OH IT'S YOU.
DON'T WORRY, LUCILLE. I WAS JUST GRAZED. GOT ANY BEERS AROUND THIS PLACE?



LUCILLE'S MY PAROLE OFFICER. SHE'S A DYKE BUT GOD KNOWS WHY.

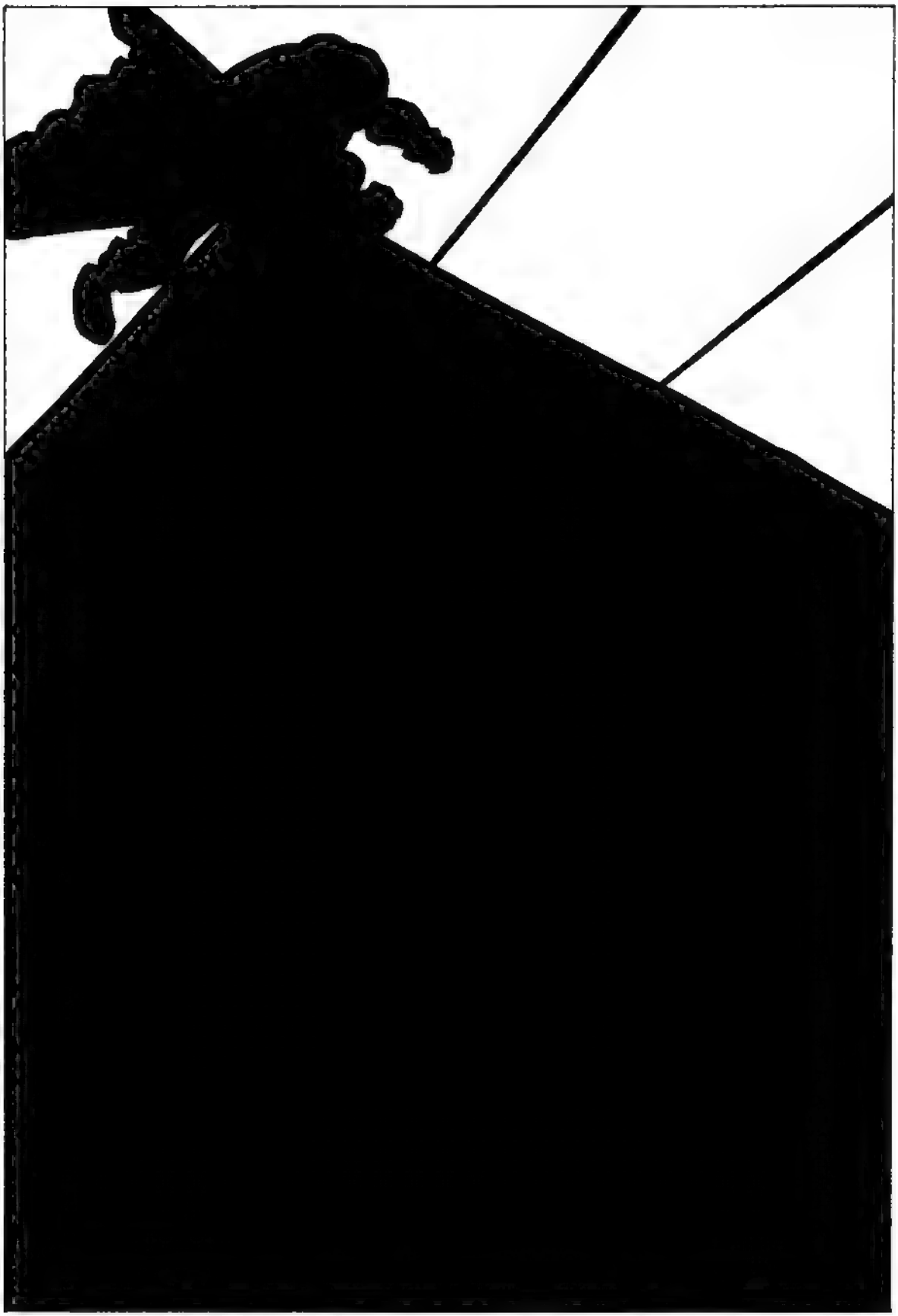
WITH THAT BODY OF HERS SHE COULD HAVE ANY MAN SHE WANTS.

THE PILLS COME FROM HER GIRLFRIEND WHO'S A SHRINK

SHE TRIED TO ANALYZE ME ONCE BUT GOT TOO SCARED.

OH, THAT'S LOVELY. YOU DIDN'T HAPPEN TO KILL ANY OF THEM, DID YOU?
NAH, I DON'T THINK SO. BUT THEY KNOW THEY BEEN IN A FIGHT, THAT'S FOR DAMN SURE.
AND HOW THE HELL DO YOU SUPPOSE I'M GOING TO SQUARE THIS WITH THE BOARD?
OW!
THERE'S NO SQUARING IT, BABE. NOT A CHANCE. NOT THIS TIME.
THIS ISN'T SOME BARROOM BRAWL OR SOME CREEP WITH A GAS CAN LOOKING TO TORCH SOME WINO. THIS IS BIG AND I'M RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF IT AND THERE'S NO PLACE I'D RATHER BE
SETTLE DOWN, MARV. TAKE ANOTHER PILL.

THERE'S NO SETTLING DOWN. IT'S GOING TO BE BLOOD FOR BLOOD AND BY THE GALLONS. IT'S THE OLD DAYS. THE BAD DAYS. THE ALL-OR-NOTHING DAYS. THEY'RE BACK. THERE'S NO CHOICES LEFT AND I'M READY FOR WAR.
PRISON WAS HELL FOR YOU, MARV. IT'LL BE LIFE THIS TIME.
HELL? YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT HELL IS. NONE OF YOU PEOPLE DO. HELL ISN'T GETTING BEAT UP OR CUT UP OR HAULED IN FRONT OF SOME FAGGOT JURY. HELL IS WAKING UP EVERY GOD DAMN MORNING AND NOT KNOWING WHY YOU'RE EVEN HERE. WHY YOU'RE EVEN BREATHING.
THAT'S WHAT HELL IS AND I'M FINALLY OUT. IT TOOK SOMEBODY WHO WAS VERY KIND TO ME GETTING KILLED TO DO IT BUT I'M OUT. I KNOW EXACTLY WHY I'M BREATHING. I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I'M DOING.

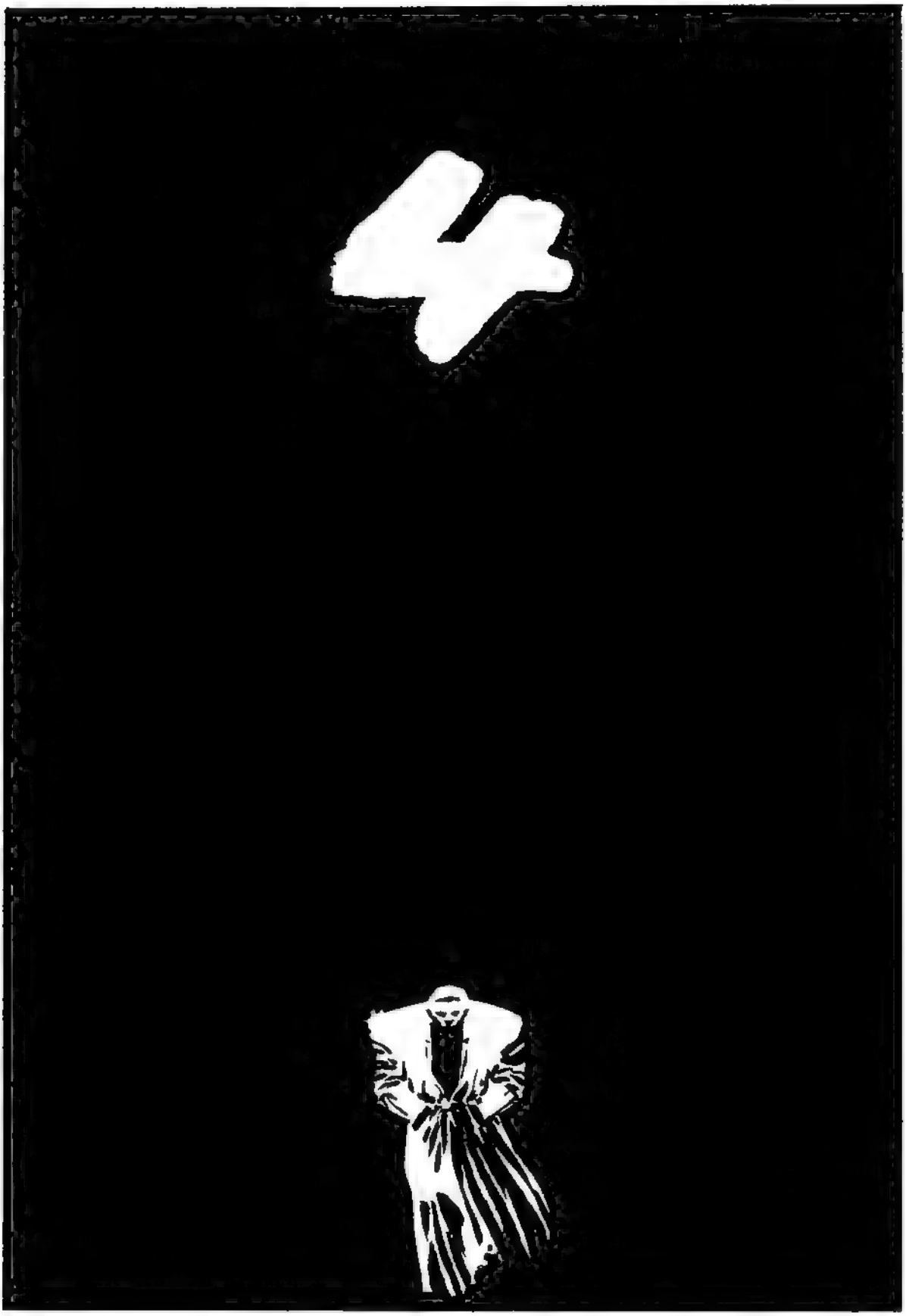


NOW FOR GLADYS
SWEET GLADYS.
BUT I'LL HAVE TO SNEAK PAST MOM
AND HER EARS HAVE GOTTEN A WHOLE LOT BETTER SINCE SHE WENT BLIND.

MOM STILL HASN'T CHANGED A THING IN THIS ROOM. EVERY WEEK SHE DUSTS IT ALL OFF SO IT LOOKS LIKE IT WAS ONLY YESTERDAY I MOVED OUT.
AND EVERY TIME I COME VISIT SHE HAS ME SLEEP IN HERE AND THE OLD SMELLS MAKE ME CRY LIKE THEY DO RIGHT NOW
I KNEW GLADYS WOULD BE SAFE HERE

I STOLE HER OFF THE TOUGHEST GUY I EVER MESSED WITH, BACK IN SCHOOL. HE WAS DEAD AT THE TIME SO HE DIDN'T MISS HER
I CALL HER GLADYS AFTER ONE OF THE SISTERS FROM SCHOOL. SHE'S ALMOST LIVED UP TO THE NAME
FOR A WHILE WE JUST GET THE FEEL OF EACH OTHER BACK, GOOD AS EVER
I TELL HER ABOUT GOLDIE AND WHAT WE HAVE TO DO.
MARVIN? IS THAT YOU, BABY?
YES, MOM SORRY I WOKE YOU UP.
FREE

OH, I COULDN'T SLEEP FOR THE WORRY. THERE WERE SOME MEN WHO CAME LOOKING FOR YOU. THEY WEREN'T POLICE.
THAT WAS ABOUT MY NEW JOB. I GOT A NEW JOB. IT'S NIGHT WORK.
AND WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO YOUR FACE?
I CUT MYSELF SHAVING, THAT'S ALL.
NOW YOU BE HONEST WITH YOUR MOTHER. YOU'RE GETTING CONFUSED AGAIN, AREN'T YOU?
MOM, I FEEL BETTER THAN I HAVE IN YEARS.
THERE'S SOMETHING YOU'RE NOT TELLING ME.
WELL, OKAY THERE IS I MET A GIRL. HER NAME'S GOLDIE
SHE'S REALLY NICE.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I WAS ALWAYS GOOD AT JIGSAW PUZZLES.

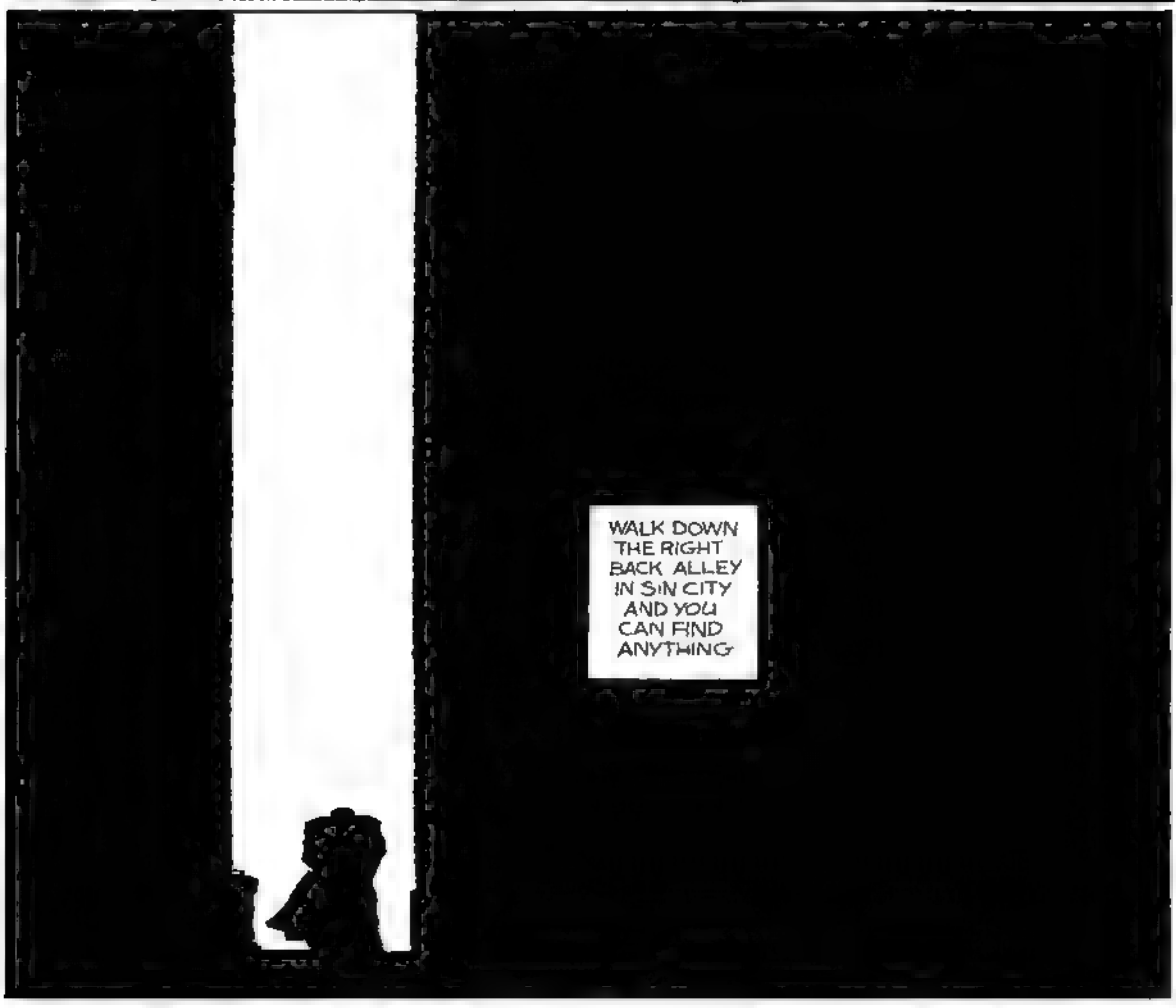
BACK IN SCHOOL I HAD THIS BUDDY, NAME OF CHUCK. HE WAS RETARDED. HE'D WATCH ME PUT THE PIECES TOGETHER AND I LOVED THAT GUY BECAUSE HE WAS THE ONLY PERSON I EVER MET WHO WAS DUMB ENOUGH TO THINK I WAS A GENIUS.

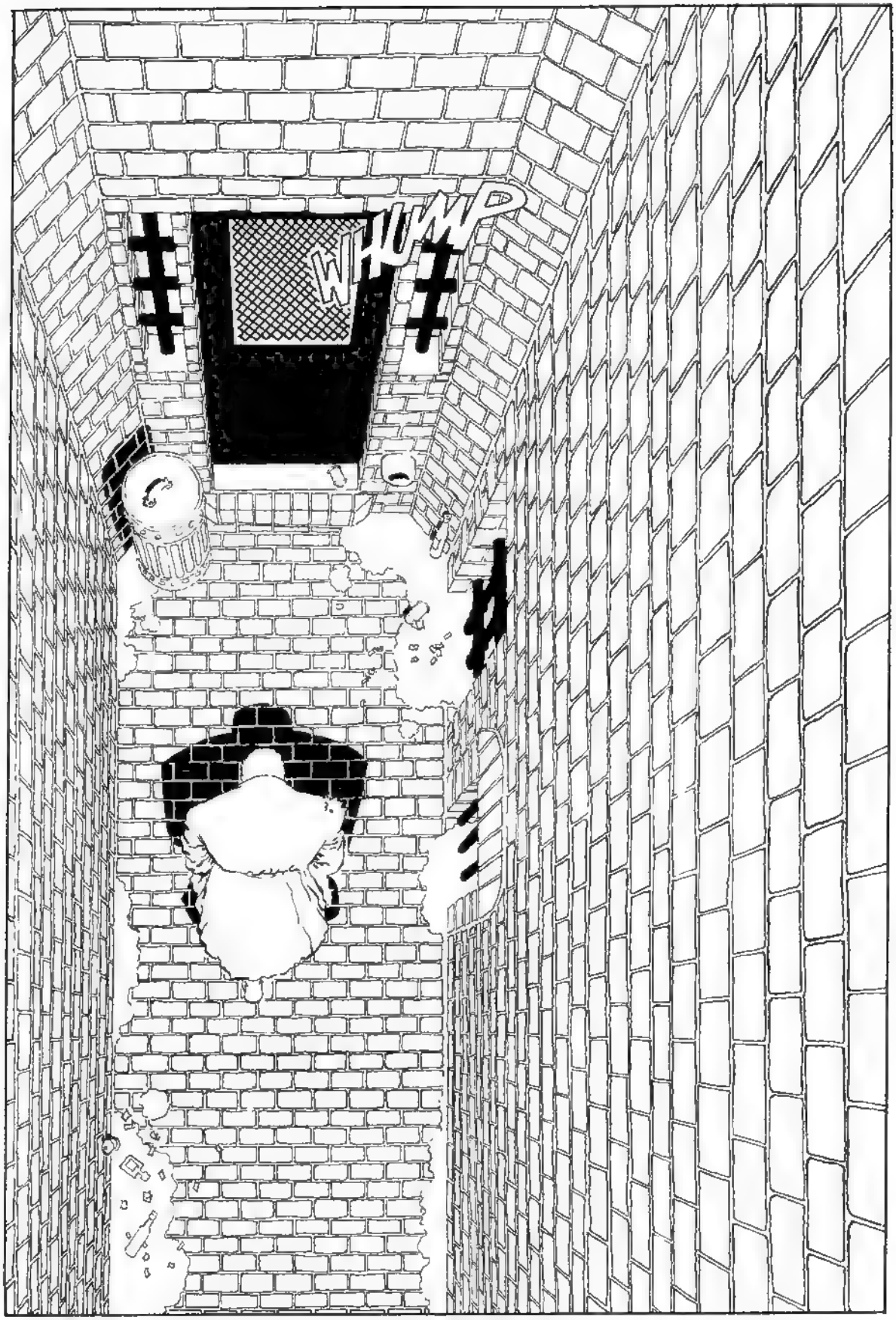
AND THE SITUATION I GOT RIGHT NOW, IT'S JUST ONE MORE JIGSAW PUZZLE. PROBLEM IS I'M DAMN SHORT ON PIECES

I'VE BEEN FRAMED FOR MURDER AND THE COPS ARE IN ON IT. BUT THE REAL ENEMY, THE SON OF A BITCH WHO KILLED THE ANGEL LYING NEXT TO ME, HE'S OUT THERE SOMEWHERE, OUT OF SIGHT, THE BIG MISSING PIECE THAT'LL GIVE ME THE HOW AND THE WHY AND A FACE AND A NAME AND A SOUL TO SEND SCREAMING INTO HELL.

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THE KILLER ISN'T SITTING BACK AND WAITING FOR THE COPS TO POLISH ME OFF. *"THERE WERE SOME MEN WHO CAME LOOKING FOR YOU,"* MOM SAID. *"THEY WEREN'T POLICE."*

SO ALL I GOT TO DO IS SEND THE BASTARD AN INVITATION. HE'LL COME OR HE'LL SEND SOMEBODY AND EITHER WAY IF I DON'T GET DEAD I'M BOUND TO WIND UP WITH ONE OR TWO MORE PUZZLE PIECES.


WALK DOWN THE RIGHT BACK ALLEY IN SIN CITY AND YOU CAN FIND ANYTHING


WHUMP

WHUMP
RUN!
AND YOU--YOUR COAT LOOKS LIKE BAGHDAD. SO'S YOUR FACE. TAKE OFF.
YAAAA
KRWGH

IN THIS TOWN JUST ABOUT ANYTHING YOU CAN NAME THAT'S WORTH DOING IS AGAINST THE LAW. IT WORKS OUT BETTER FOR EVERYBODY THIS WAY. COPS AND POLITICIANS MAKE THEIR FORTUNES BY LOOKING THE OTHER WAY WHILE CROOKS LIKE KADIE GET AWAY WITH CHARGING TEN BUCKS A DRINK.

BUT HERE AT KADIE'S MY DRINKS ARE ALWAYS FREE. THE SWEET OLD TRANSSEXUAL WOULD BREAK MY ARM IF I TRIED TO PAY. I'VE DONE HER FAVORS AND THERE'S NOBODY WHO KNOWS WHERE THE BODIES ARE BURIED.

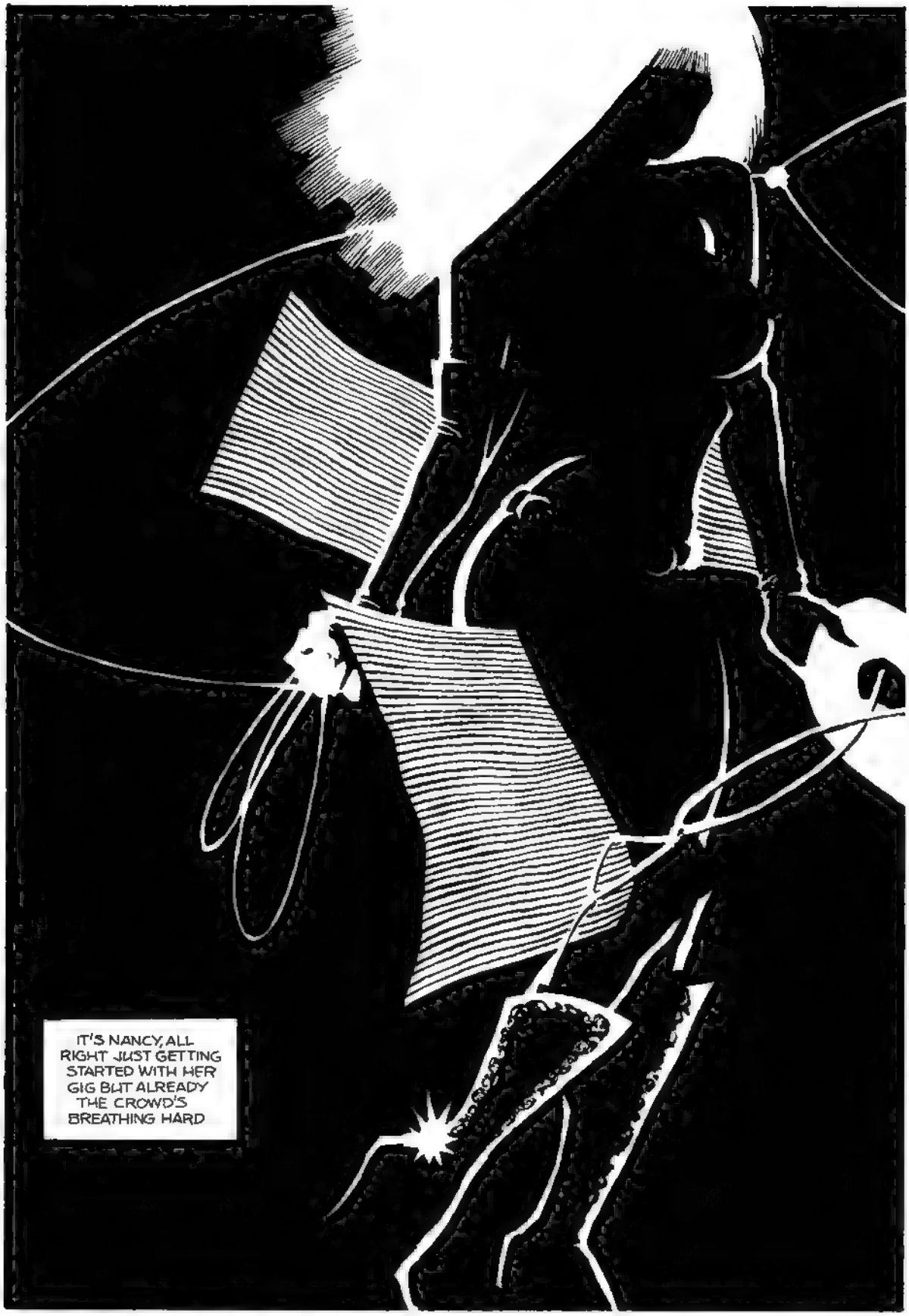
NOBODY BUT ME.

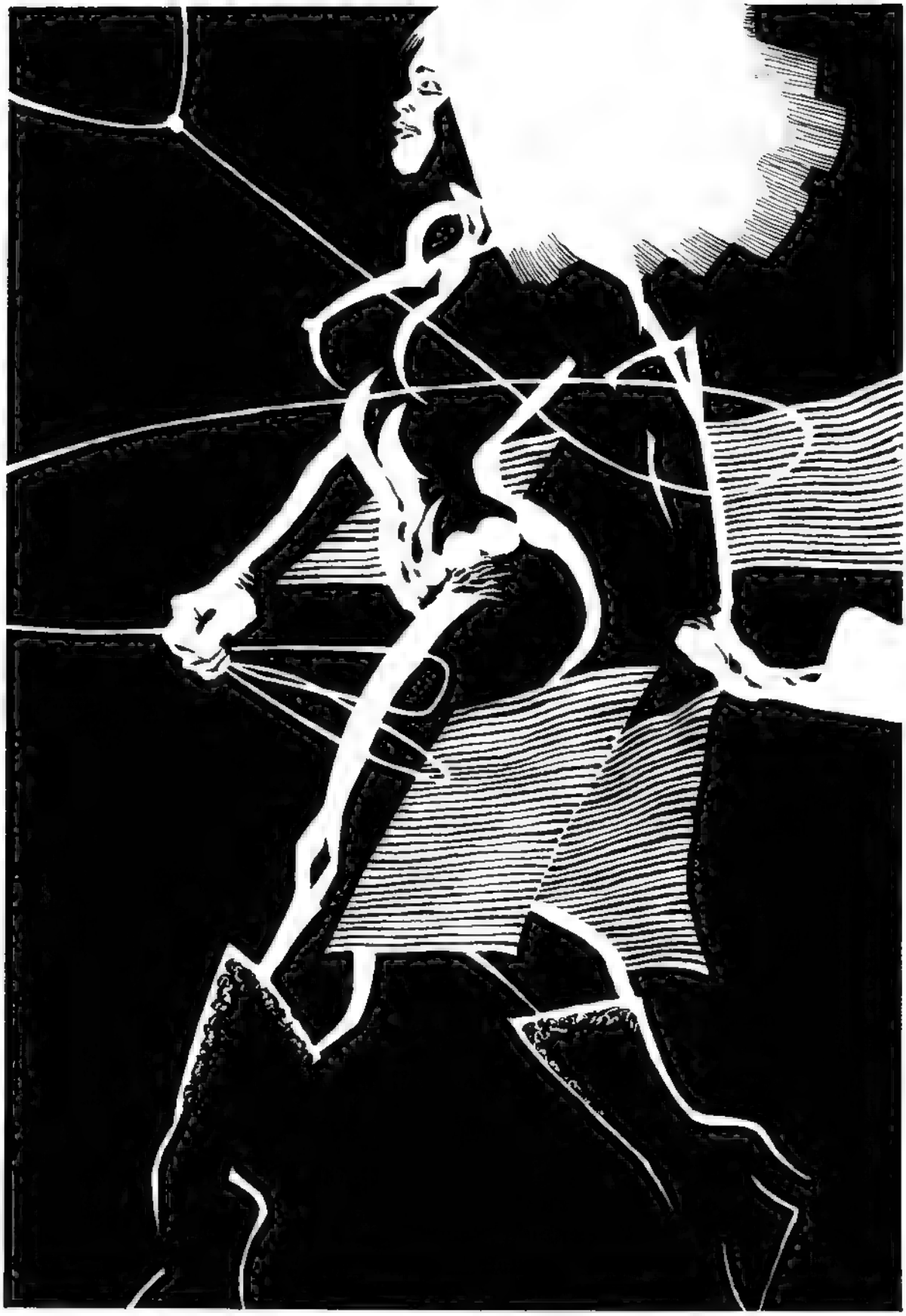
KADIE'S IS MY KIND OF JOINT. COUNTRY, AND I DON'T MEAN THAT TOUCHY-FEELY *"YOU PUT ME ON A NATURAL HIGH"* GARBAGE THEY'RE PASSING OFF AS COUNTRY THESE DAYS. NO, AT KADIE'S IT'S THE OLD STUFF. IT'S CONWAY AND TAMMY AND MERLE, FROM BACK BEFORE THEY WENT ALL SQUISHY. SONGS TO DRINK TO AND TO CRY TO.

I'M HIT SQUARE IN THE CHEST WITH THE PUMPED-UP-ALL-THE-WAY BASS OF EMMYLOU BELTING OUT *"DRIVING WHEEL."*

MUST BE NANCY UP ON STAGE.

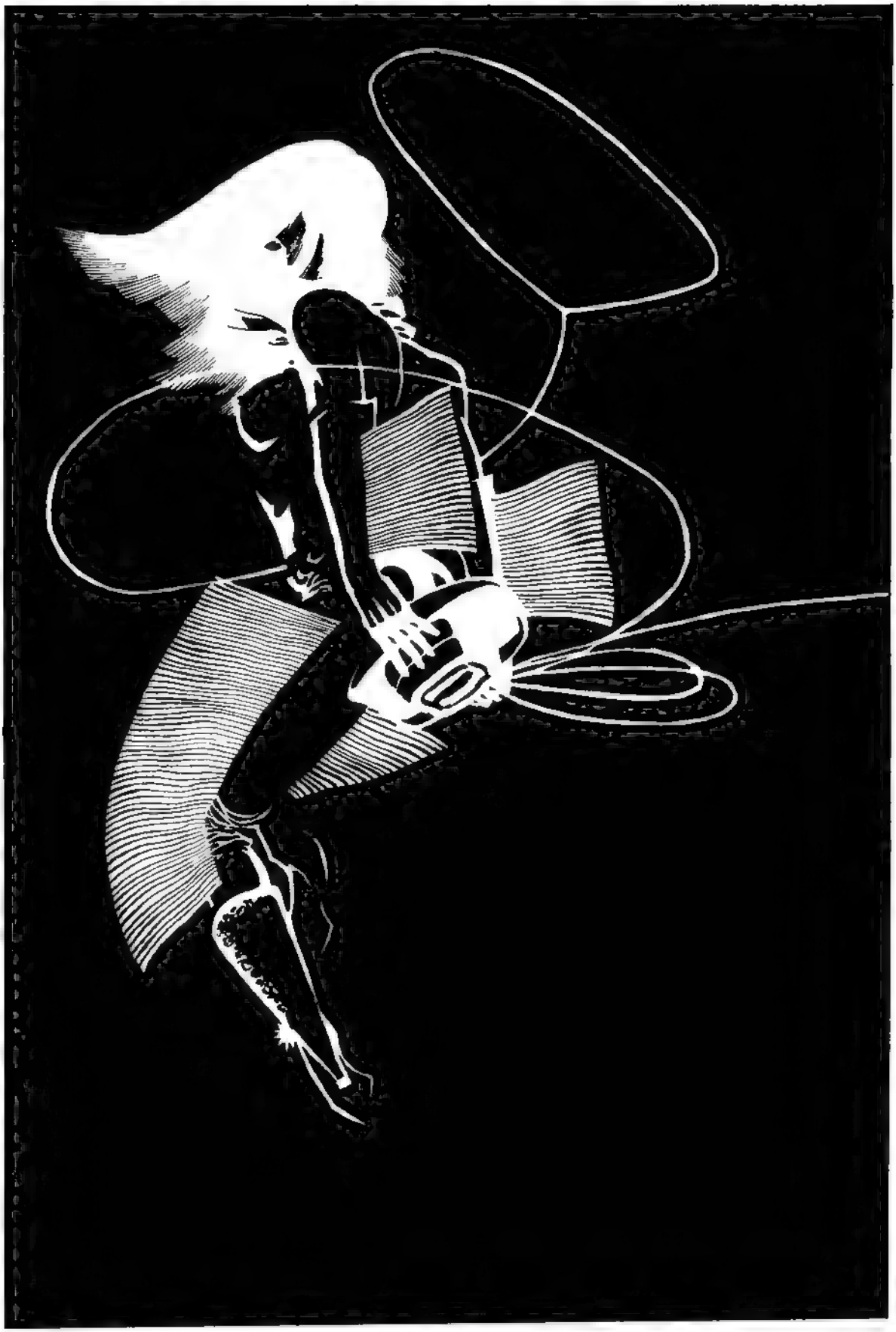
THAT'S HER FAVORITE SONG TO SHAKE IT TO.

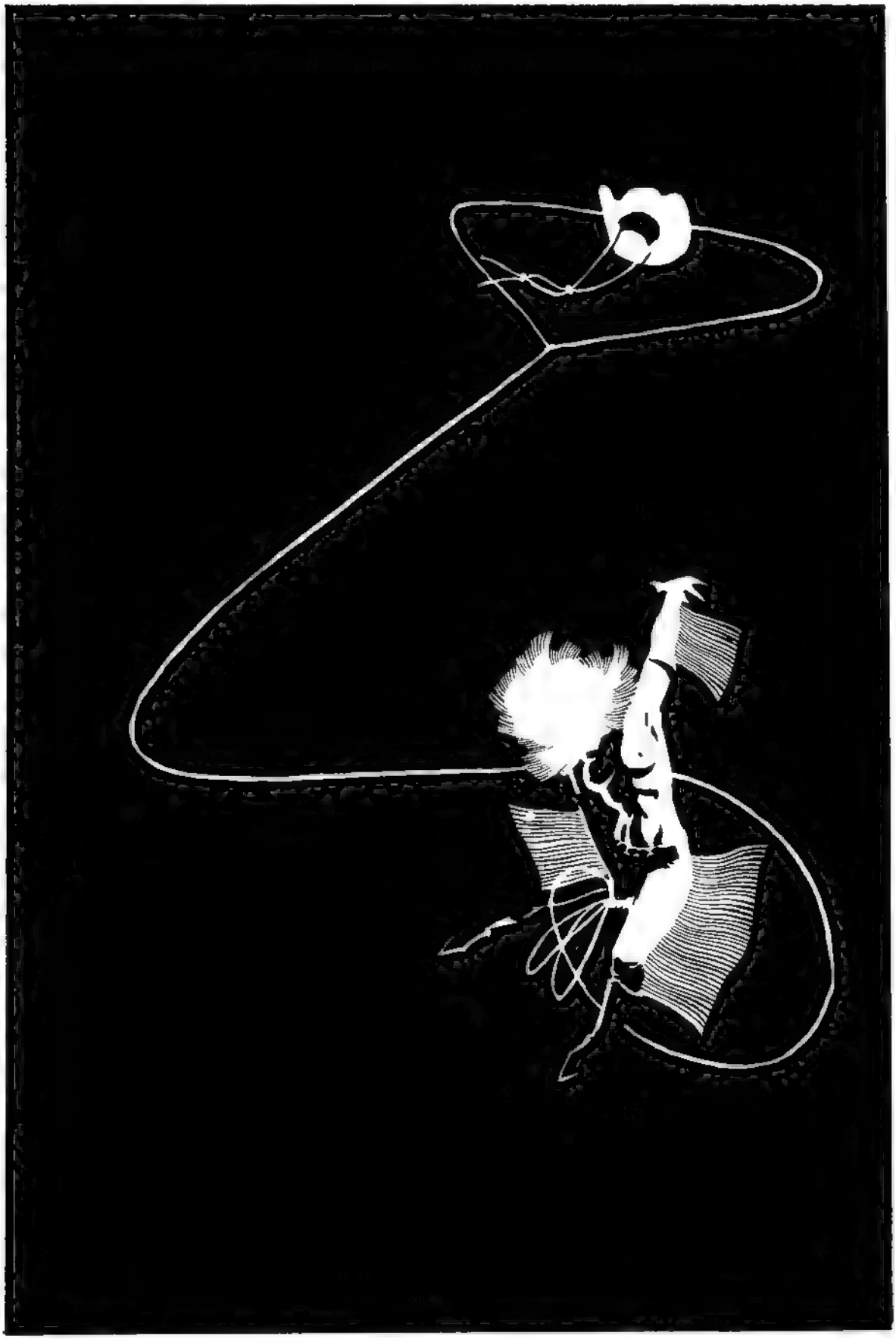

IT'S NANCY, ALL RIGHT JUST GETTING STARTED WITH HER GIG BUT ALREADY THE CROWD'S BREATHING HARD



PLENTY OF NIGHTS I'VE DROOLED OVER NANCY, SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH ALL THE OTHER LOSERS LIKE ME
BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR TONIGHT.
I'M LOOKING FOR SOMETHING SMALL AND HAIRY
AAAK!
THUMP
TAKE IT EASY, WEEV L. I'M HERE TO DO YOU A FAVOR. IT'S MONEY IN YOUR POCKET

KRNCH
SPREAD THE WORD, WEEVIL AND GET GOOD CASH FOR T BECAUSE IT'S WORTH IT.
HHUKK
TELL THEM I'VE BEEN HITTING THE JOINTS, DRUNK OFF MY BUTT, SHOOTING OFF MY MOUTH, CRYING OVER SOME HOT BABE NAME OF GOLDIE
GHAAK
WHAT'LL IT BE, MARV?
A SHOT AND A BREW, SHELLIE. THANKS





SHOW'S OVER, BUDDY DRINK UP.
NOW THAT IS ONE FINE COAT YOU'RE WEARING THERE
URP
I LOVE HIT MEN NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO TO THEM, YOU DON'T FEEL BAD. FACT IS, THE WORSE YOU DO, THE BETTER IT GETS
RIGHT ON CUE KADIE KICKS THE VOLUME UP TO MAX--LOUD ENOUGH TO DROWN OUT ANYTHING...
MUST'VE SET YOU BACK FIVE BILLS THAT COAT, I MEAN-- DAMN IF IT ISN'T ONE FINE PIECE OF WORK..
YOU SHUT UP

AND HERE I THOUGHT THEY STOPPED MAKING DECENT COATS BACK IN THE FIFTIES--
--LIKE CARS, YOU KNOW?
OOF!
WHOOP!
HUH?
WHUFF
STAN--HE'S GOT ME--
CHUDD
BLAM
GHAA
GUGG
HNGAA
GGLAAHHH
CHUDD!CHUDD!CHUDDD!

TAKE IT OFF
WHAT?
HHH
THE COAT TAKE IT OFF YOU'RE BLEEDING ALL OVER IT FINE COAT LIKE THAT AND YOU'RE BLEEDING ALL OVER IT IT'S JUST NOT RIGHT
ALL RIGHT OKAY IT'S ALL YOURS OH, GOD...

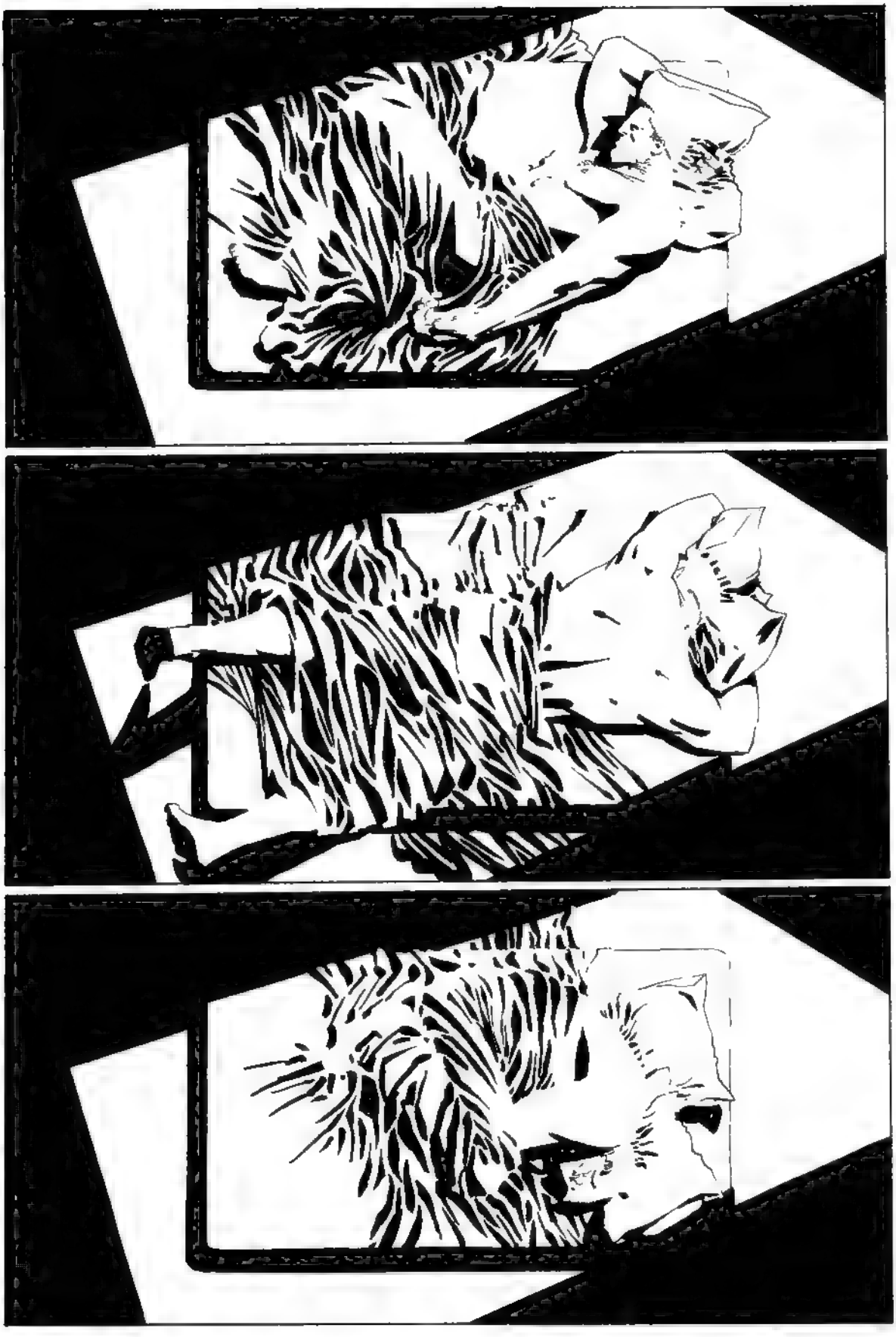
BLAM
THANKS!
oooAGG OH GODDo
IT WASN'T YOU LOSERS WHO KILLED GOLDIE, THE GUY WHO DID THAT, HE KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING. STILL, YOU GOT TO HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL ME LIKE WHO IT WAS WHO SENT YOU!
DON'T KILL ME, MAN--
GAAA
WHUK
I ALREADY HAVE KILLED YOU, YOU JERK. WISE UP!

BUT EVEN THOUGH IT FEELS LIKE NIAGARA FALLS DOWN THERE YOU'LL BE A DAMN LONG TIME DYING AND I CAN MAKE IT QUICK OR I CAN MAKE IT WORSE I DON'T HEAR YOU GIVING ME ANY NAME, JERK--
--GUESS WHEN I SHOT YOU IN THE BELLY I AIMED A LITTLE TOO HIGH
NNOOO
BAM
OOOAGG
YOU KEEP HOLDING OUT ON ME LIKE THIS AND I'M GOING TO HAVE TO GET REALLY NASTY. I DON'T THINK YOU WANT THAT TO HAPPEN ANY MORE THAN I DO.
IT WAS TELLY STERN PASSED ME THE ORDER. RUNS THE TABLES OVER TO THE TRIPLE ACE CLUB

THANKS AGAIN.
BLAM
THESE CLOWNS HAVE GOT TO HAVE SOME MONEY ON THEM...

THEN THE DAMNEDEST THING HAPPENS FOR A SECOND I SMELL THAT ANGEL SMELL THAT BELONGED ONLY TO GOLDIE.
CRAZY JUST NEED MY MED CINE, IS ALL.
BASTARD. YOU'RE GOING TO PAY FOR WHAT YOU DID TO ME.

AW, HELL. THE SUN'S UP.
NOW I GOT TO GO AND FIND ME A PLACE TO SACK OUT
AND HERE I WAS JUST GETTING WARMED UP. DAMN.

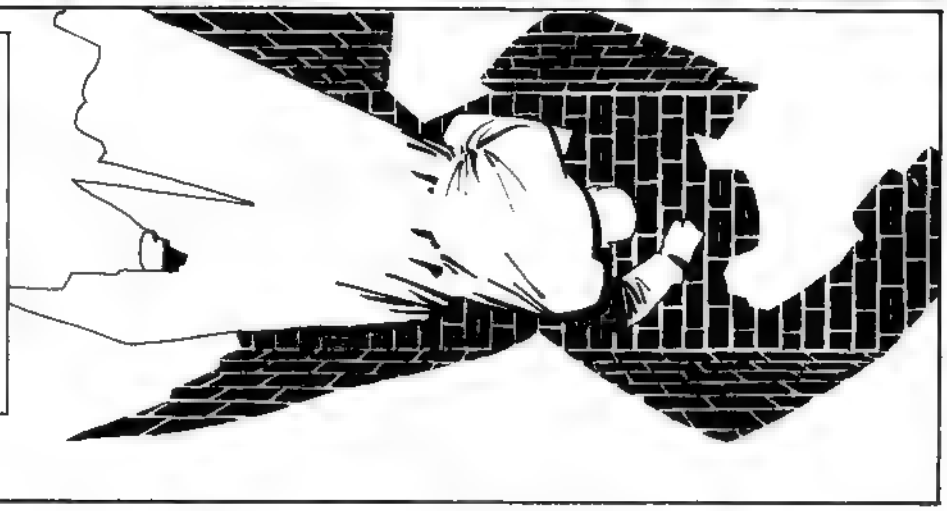


NO GOOD TRYING TO SLEEP AND IT'S NOT THE STREET NOISE OR THE STENCH OF THIS NINE-DOLLAR FLOP, EITHER. I'M JUST TOO EXCITED. I CAN'T EVER SLEEP WHEN I'M EXCITED.
NO GAME ON TV. NOTHING TO DO BUT SIT AND WAIT FOR THE DAMN SUN AND ALL THE PRYING EYES TO GET OUT OF THE WAY.
I HATE THE SUN.
AND THE EYES.
THE AIR COOLS. THE SOUNDS CHANGE. THE SUITS AND BRIEFCASES SCURRY TO THEIR FORTRESSES AND BOLT THEIR DOORS AND BALANCE THEIR CHECKBOOKS AND IGNORE THE SCREAMS AND TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT WHO REALLY OWNS SIN CITY.

MY HANDS ARE SHAKING LIKE A KID'S AT CHRISTMAS. THE YEARS FALL AWAY, JUST SO MANY CHUNKS OF DEAD FLESH.

AND THERE'S BLOOD IN MY HANDS, IN MY ARMS, POUNDING BETWEEN MY EARS AND PUSHING ME FORWARD AND TELLING ME I'LL NEVER BE TIRED AGAIN...

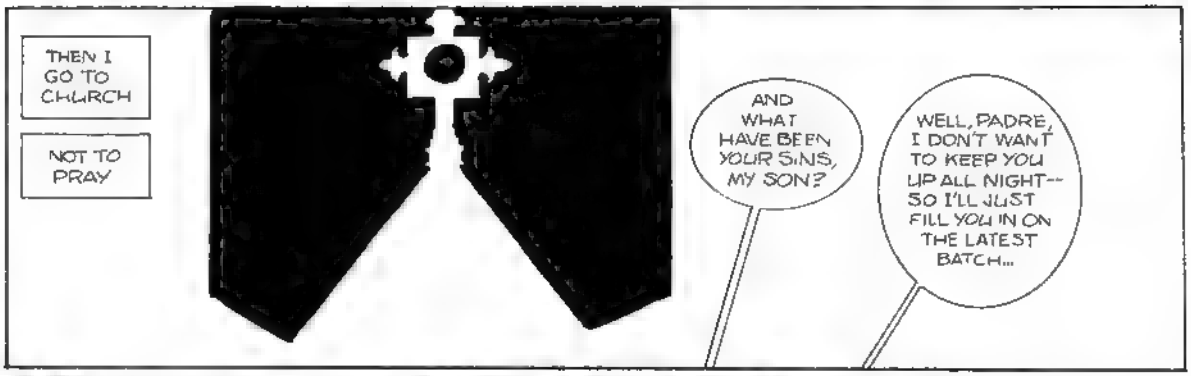
...AND THERE'S NO THINKING AND NO NEED FOR IT. THE INSTINCTS TAKE OVER, WHITE HOT, THE ANIMAL IN ME I TRIED TO DROWN IN BOOZE AND BLOODY BRAWLS, HE'S BACK, HE'S BACK AND HE'S HOWLING, HE'S LAUGHING OUT LOUD, HE'S CRAZY WITH THE PURE SWEET HATE OF IT ALL...



FEEL LIKE TALKING YET, TOMMY?
FLSH!
GLAKK

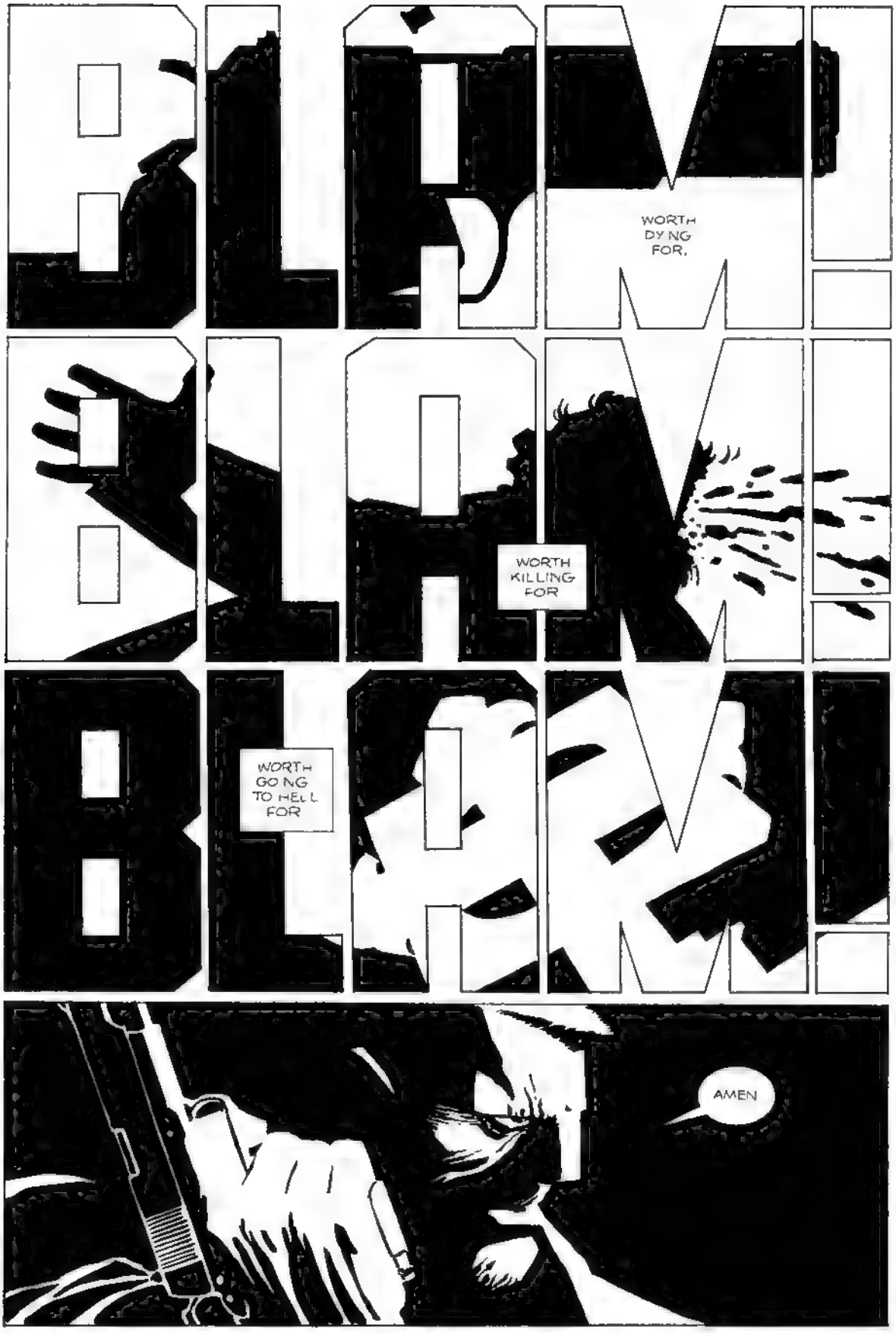
...AND SIN CITY, SHE'S A BIG, BAD BROAD FLAT ON HER BACK BEGGING FOR IT AND I TAKE HER FOR ALL SHE'S WORTH AND THEN I TAKE HER AGAIN AND STILL SHE'S BEGGING.
DAMN, IT'S GOOD TO BE ALIVE.

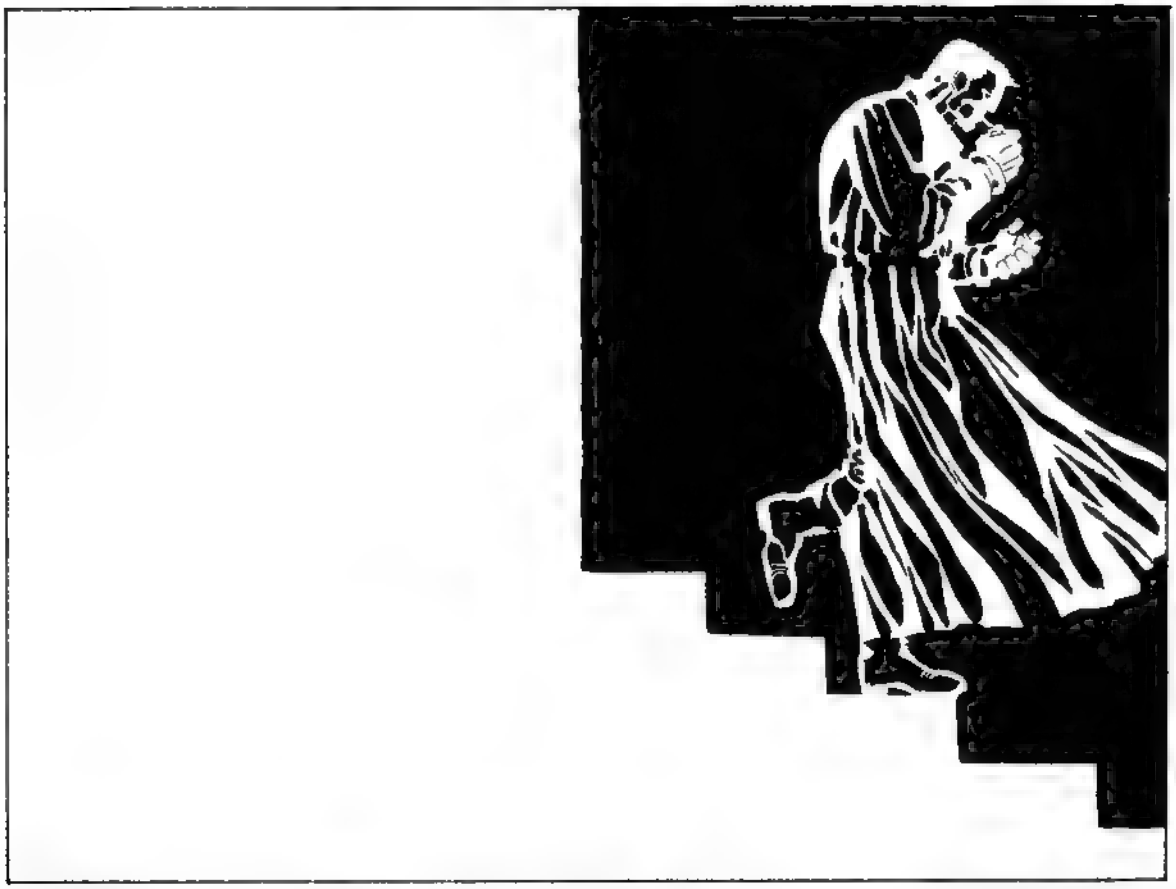
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT I'M HAVING A BALL
YAAAAAA


THEN I GO TO CHURCH
NOT TO PRAY
AND WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR SINS, MY SON?
WELL, PADRE, I DON'T WANT TO KEEP YOU UP ALL NIGHT-- SO I'LL JUST FILL YOU IN ON THE LATEST BATCH...

THESE HERE HANDS OF MINE, THEY GOT BLOOD ALL OVER THEM--I DON'T MEAN REALLY. I WOULDN'T COME TO CHURCH WITHOUT WIPING IT OFF
YOU'RE SPEAKING FIGURATIVELY
I KNEW THERE WAS A WORD FOR IT YOU'RE ONE SMART GUY MYSELF, I'M NOT SO BRIGHT. WHEN I NEED TO FIND SOMETHING OUT, I JUST LOOK FOR SOMEBODY WHO KNOWS MORE THAN ME AND I GO AND ASK THEM BUT SOMETIMES I ASK PRETTY HARD.

BY WAY OF A FOR INSTANCE, I KILLED THREE MEN TONIGHT. I TORTURED THEM FIRST
YOU MIGHT SAY I BEEN WORKING MY WAY UP THE FOOD CHAIN THE FIRST TWO, THEY WERE MINNOWS, SMALL TIME MESSENGERS--
--BUT IT WAS CONNELLY--THE MONEY MAN--WHO FINGERED YOU, PADRE
CHKCHAK
YOU KNOW WHAT THAT SOUND MEANS SIT DOWN
DEAR LORD, MAN. THIS IS A HOUSE OF GOD.
JUST GIVE ME A DAMN NAME
...ROARK
ROARK?. YOU ARE REALLY PUSHING YOUR LUCK, TRYING TO FEED ME GARBAGE LIKE THIS
IT CAN'T BE THAT BIG
FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF, YOU SORRY BASTARD! THERE'S A FARM OUT AT NORTH CROSS AND LENNOX IT'S ALL THERE FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF--AND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT-
--ASK YOURSELF IF THAT CORPSE OF A SLUT IS WORTH DYING FOR


BLAM!
WORTH DY NG FOR.
BLAM!
WORTH KILLING FOR
BLAM!
WORTH GO NG TO HELL FOR
AMEN



THERE ISN'T MUCH BETTER IN LIFE THAN A SMOKE WHEN YOU HAVEN'T HAD ONE IN A WHILE.
LIKE AFTER A MOVIE. OR AFTER CHURCH...
...I JUST MURDERED A PRIEST...
...HIS KEYS SAY THE PADRE DROVE A MERCEDES...
...OR AT LEAST WHAT THEY'RE PASSING OFF AS A MERCEDES, THESE DAYS.
MODERN CARS THEY ALL LOOK LIKE ELECTRIC SHAVERS
HNH?
SKREEEEEEEE

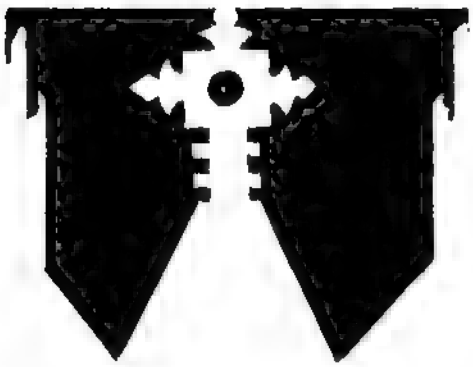
SKREEEE
EE
CHK

GOLDIE?
WHMPP
GHAA
LEVIII

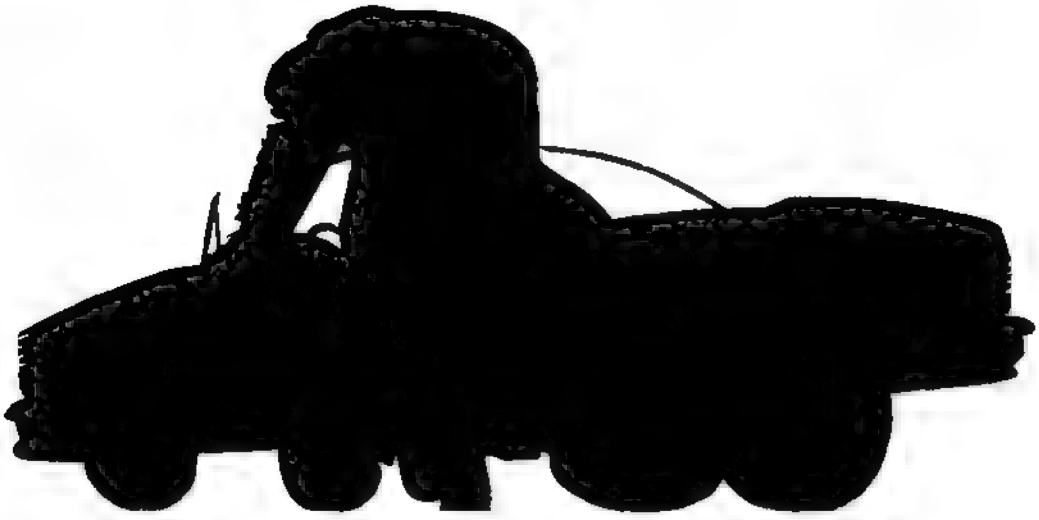
SKREEEE

SKREEE
GOLDIE?
WHUMPP
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

SPAK
SPAK
SPAK
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
WHUFF
SPAK
SPAK
SPAK
GOLDIE?



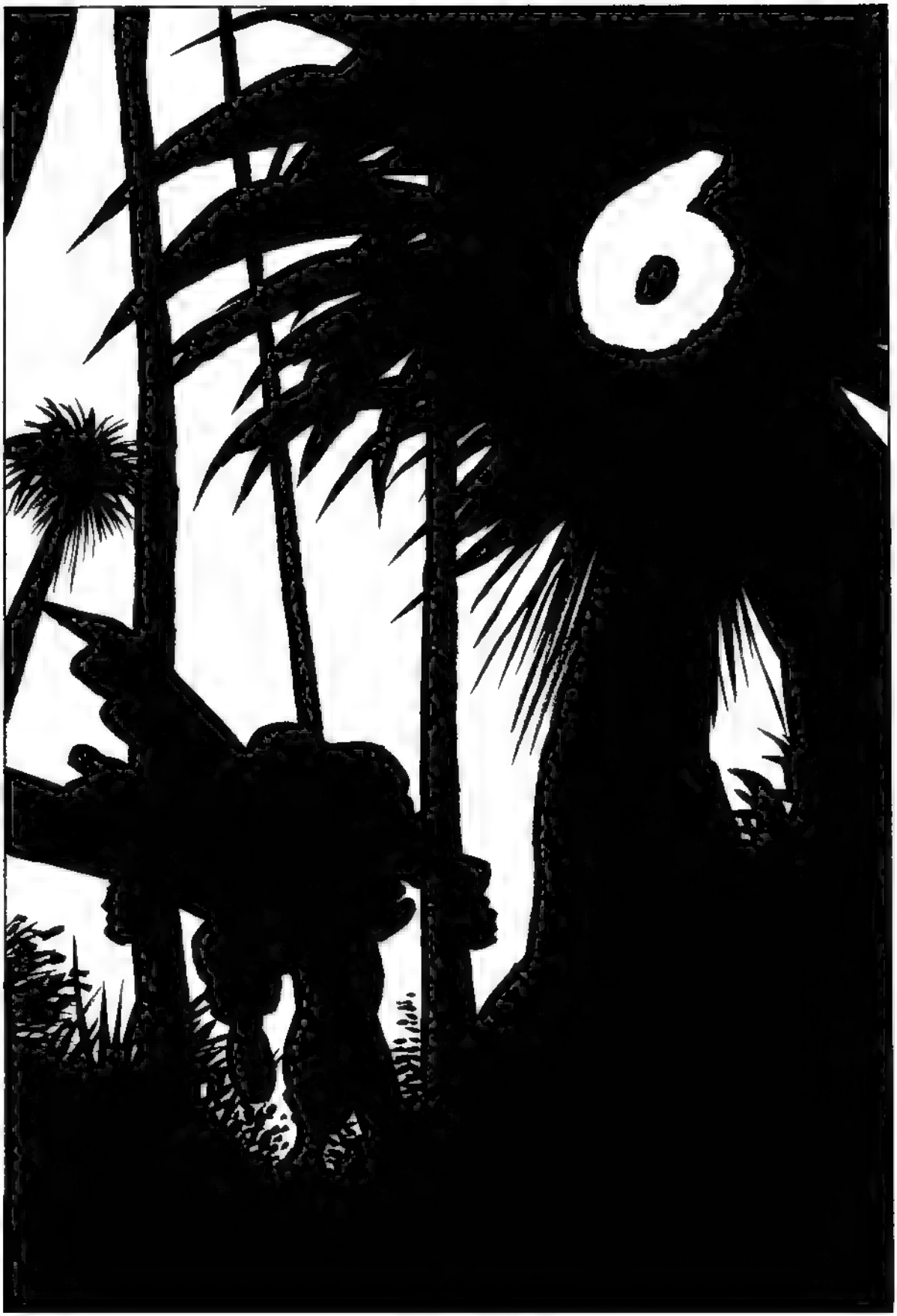
..NO. COULDN'T HAVE BEEN GOLDIE...
KEFF



SIN CITY FALLS AWAY BEHIND ME, NOISY AND UGLY AS ALL HELL. THE MERCEDES HUMS AND HANDLES LIKE A DREAM. SHE MAY LOOK LIKE SOME JAP DESIGNED HER, BUT THE ENGINE'S A BEAUTY
MY HEAD STARTS TO CLEAR. THINGS START TO MAKE SENSE
THAT WASN'T GOLDIE BACK THERE. I LET MYSELF GET CONFUSED AGAIN. IT'S OKAY WHEN I SMELL THINGS THAT AREN'T THERE OR EVEN WHEN I HEAR THINGS BUT IT'S PRETTY SERIOUS WHEN I SEE THINGS

IT'S MY OWN FAULT AND NOBODY ELSE'S THAT I GOT CONFUSED. I WOULD'VE BEEN ALL RIGHT IF I TOOK MY MEDICINE WHEN I SHOULD HAVE
I'VE BEEN HAVING SO MUCH FUN I FORGOT TO TAKE MY MEDICINE
THAT WASN'T GOLDIE BACK THERE. GOLDIE IS DEAD AND THAT'S THE WHOLE REASON I'VE BEEN DOING WHAT I'VE BEEN DOING
I FORGOT TO TAKE MY MEDICINE.

WHEN YOU'VE GOT A CONDITION IT'S BAD TO FORGET YOUR MEDICINE.
GULP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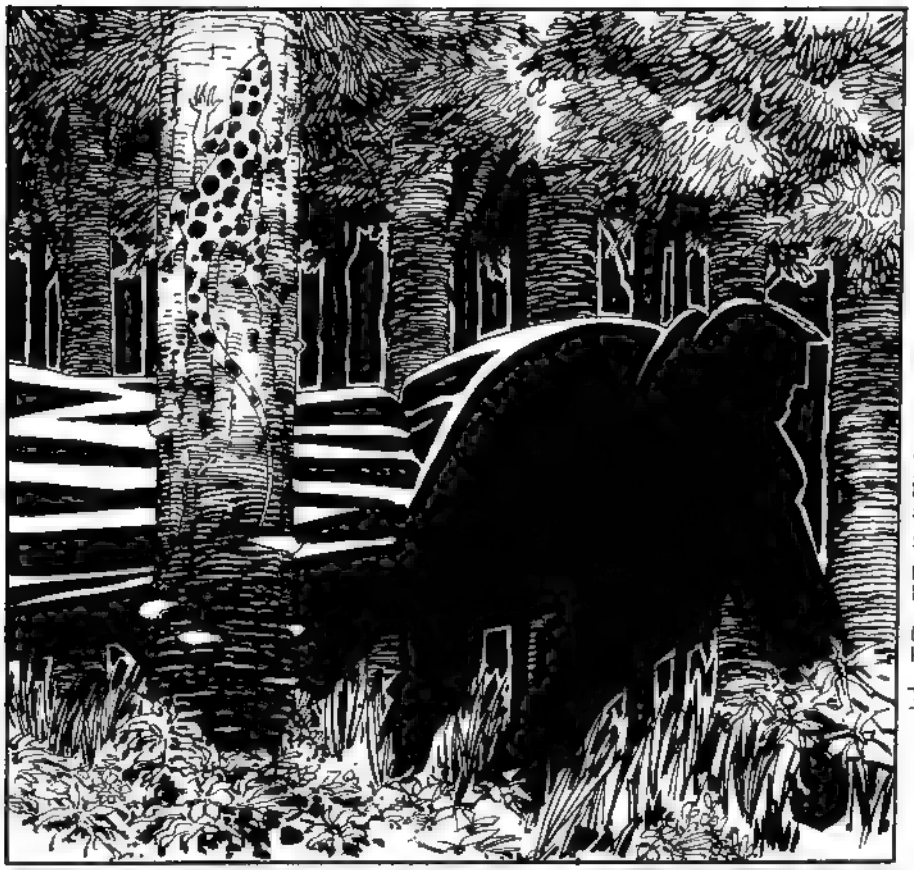


TWO MILES FROM THE FARM I SPOT A DINER AND LEAVE THE MERCEDES IN THE PARKING LOT AND MOVE AHEAD ON FOOT. IF THERE'S ANYTHING TO WHAT THE PADRE TOLD ME I'VE GOT TO PLAY THIS CAREFUL.

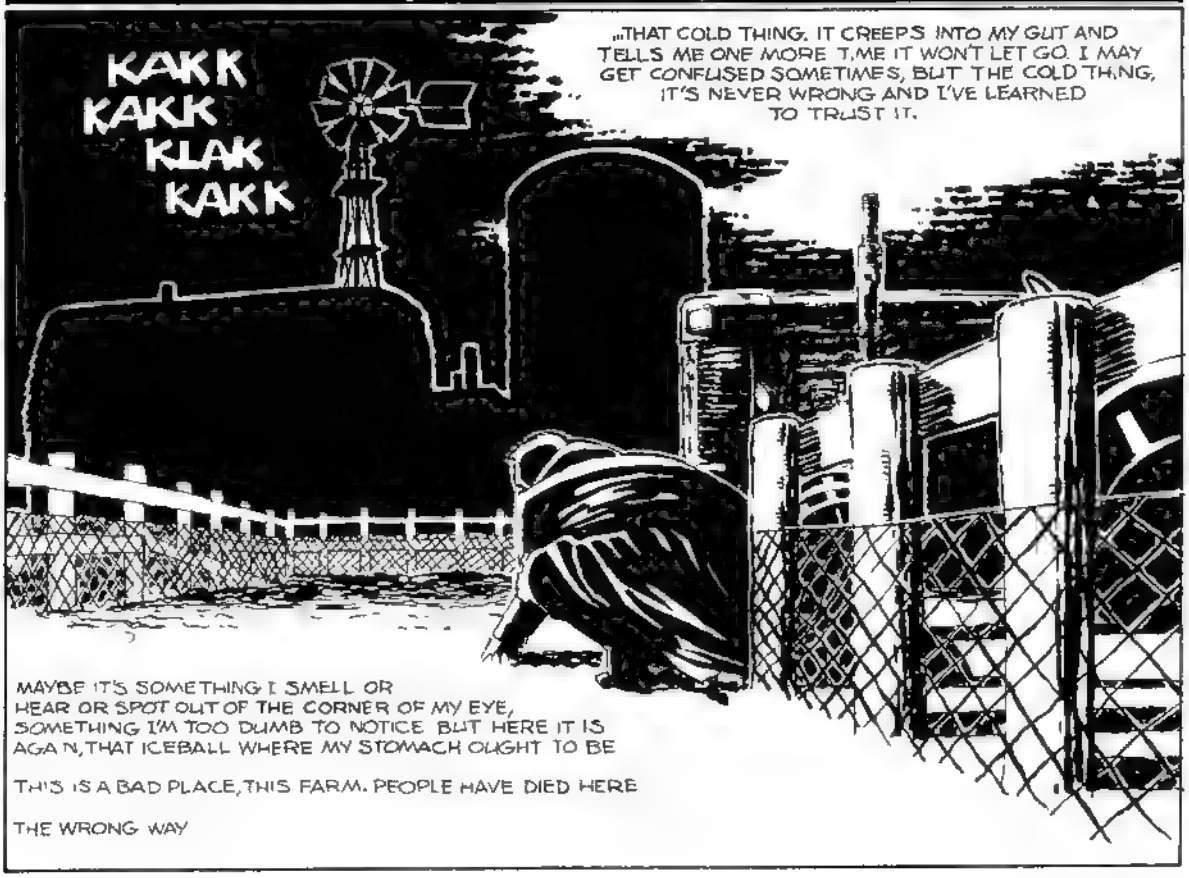
EVEN IF IT MEANS CUTTING THROUGH THE WOODS AT NIGHT

I HATE THE WOODS AT NIGHT. ESPECIALLY THE SOUNDS. PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT NATURE LIKE IT'S ALL SWEET AND FRIENDLY. ALL I CAN FIGURE IS THEY NEVER SPENT A NIGHT TIED TO A TREE IN THE WOODS.

EVER SINCE CAMP I'VE HATED THE WOODS.

THERE ISN'T MUCH ELSE THAT SCARES ME.

KLAK
KLAK
KAK
KAK KAKK


KAKK
KAKK
KLAK
KAKK
...THAT COLD THING. IT CREEPS INTO MY GUT AND TELLS ME ONE MORE TIME IT WON'T LET GO. I MAY GET CONFUSED SOMETIMES, BUT THE COLD THING, IT'S NEVER WRONG AND I'VE LEARNED TO TRUST IT.
MAYBE IT'S SOMETHING I SMELL OR HEAR OR SPOT OUT OF THE CORNER OF MY EYE, SOMETHING I'M TOO DUMB TO NOTICE BUT HERE IT IS AGAIN, THAT ICEBALL WHERE MY STOMACH OUGHT TO BE
THIS IS A BAD PLACE, THIS FARM. PEOPLE HAVE DIED HERE
THE WRONG WAY

RRR
RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRROWF
I DON'T WANT A FIGHT, POOCH.
RRRRRRRRRRRRRRR

ROAR WHUKK
KRNK
GNR

NO WAY I WAS GOING TO USE MY GUN ON YOU, BLODDY. YOU'RE EVEN DUMBER THAN I AM AND BESIDES, IT'S WHOEVER OWNS YOU I'M CURIOUS ABOUT.
BECAUSE THERE'S BLOOD ON YOUR BREATH AND I THINK I KNOW WHAT KIND.
SO I SNIFF AROUND TO SEE WHAT'S BURIED.

HERE WE GO...
THIS DIDN'T COME OUT OF ANY COYOTE.
THIS NEITHER.
ALL OF A SUDDEN--
RIGHT BEHIND ME--
--IMPOSSIBLE--
--NOBODY CAN SNEAK UP ON ME -- NOBODY--

WHUNGG
BLAM
KRAK

THUKKK
THKK
MY FINGERS DIE.
I GO BLIND.

NOT A SOUND--NOBODY'S THAT QUIET--
NOBODY EXCEPT THE ONE WHO SNUCK INTO THAT HOTEL ROOM TWO NIGHTS AGO
GRAA
...IT WAS YOU, YOU BASTARD! YOU KILLED HER! YOU KILLED GOLDIE!

KRAK

FOR A WHILE IT'S OUTER SPACE WITH NO STARS IN IT, COLD AND BLACK AND BOTTOMLESS. I TUMBLE, WEIGHTLESS AS A GHOST.

FOR A WHILE I'VE GOT NO BRAIN AND NO BODY AND THAT'S FINE BY ME.

THEN THE BROKEN BITS START WITH THEIR NAGGING. THE JAGGED LITTLE BASTARDS DANCE LIKE LEPRECHAUNS, PULLING TOGETHER IN A BULLIES' CIRCLE, LAUGHING AT ME, TELLING ME I'M AN EVEN BIGGER LOSER THAN I EVER THOUGHT I WAS.

THEY PLAY IT BACK FOR ME LIKE A MOVIE ON REWIND-- FROM THE SUNBURST OF THE SLEDGEHAMMER HITTING MY FACE--BACK TO THE SOFT CHILLY SKIN OF THE GODDESS WHO WAS MURDERED IN MY BED.

I BLEW IT, GOLDIE. I FOUND YOUR KILLER BUT HE WAS BETTER THAN ME, TOO QUIET AND TOO QUICK, A KILLER BORN. HE TOOK ME OUT LIKE I WAS A GIRL SCOUT. HE DIDN'T EVEN BREAK A SWEAT...

...BUT IF I'M DOING ALL THIS THINKING, THAT MEANS I'M STILL ALIVE, DOESN'T IT?

WHY DIDN'T HE FINISH THE JOB?... OR IS THIS THE HELL I'VE SPENT MY WHOLE LIFE EARNING, FALLING, FOREVER FALLING, NEVER KNOWING?

THEN THE HURT COMES. THE LIVING HURT. STREAKING FROM BEHIND MY EYES, FINDING PLACES TO HAVE ITS FUN.

A SMELL HITS MY NOSTRILS, HARD, BURNING, ANTISEPTIC.

LIGHT GROWS.

I DIVE FOR IT.

JHNFF
KHOFF
HEFF
HNH?

HE KEEPS THE HEADS. HE EATS THE REST
LUCILLE?
HE EATS PEOPLE. IT'S NOT JUST THAT WOLF OF HIS. IT'S HIM. HE EATS PEOPLE. THE WOLF JUST GETS SCRAPS. BONES. IT'S HIM. HE EATS PEOPLE.
YOU'RE IN SHOCK...
HE COOKS THEM FIRST.

YOU GOT TO SETTLE DOWN, KID. YOU'RE IN SHOCK. HERE, LET'S GET YOU WARM..
HE COOKS THEM LIKE THEY WERE STEAKS, JUST LIKE THEY WERE STEAKS AND NOW HE'S GOT BOTH OF US
IT'S ALL RIGHT. TAKE A NICE, SLOW BREATH...
I DON'T KNOW IF HE'S GOING TO EAT YOU OR NOT. IT'S GIRLS HE EATS AS FAR AS I CAN TELL. JUST LOOK AT THE WALL. THE HEADS ON THE WALL. THE HEADS ON THE WALL.
HE MADE ME WATCH. SON OF A BITCH. KEPT SMILING THAT DAMN SMILE AND MADE ME WATCH HIM SUCK THE MEAT OFF MY FINGERS. SON OF A BITCH. HE MADE ME WATCH.
OH, JESUS..

HE MADE ME
WAAAAA
AAAAAAA
AAA
AAAA
...CHRIST, I COULD USE A CIGARETTE

DAMES. SOMETIMES ALL THEY GOT TO DO IS LET IT OUT AND A FEW BUCKETS LATER THERE'S NO WAY YOU'D EVER KNOW

I WATCH LUCILLE SLIDE EVERY GORGEOUS INCH OF HERSELF INTO MY COAT I SHAKE MY HEAD FOR WHAT MUST BE THE MILLIONTH TIME. HARDWARE LIKE SHE'S GOT AND LUCILLE'S A DYKE. IT'S A DAMN CRIME.

BUT I DON'T SAY A WORD ABOUT THAT. I PIPED UP AT HER ONCE THAT MAYBE SHE OUGHT TO GET TREATMENT OR SOMETHING AND SHE HAULED OFF AND NAILED ME WITH A PUNCH THAT SHOWED ME THERE WAS PLENTY OF MUSCLE UNDER ALL THAT HEAVEN.

BUT THAT WAS YEARS AGO AND IT HASN'T GOT ANYTHING TO DO WITH GETTING OUT OF HERE.

YOU'VE BROUGHT US SOME BIG TROUBLE THIS TIME, MARV. WHOEVER'S BEHIND ALL THIS HAS GOT HIS CONNECTIONS-- RIGHT IN THE DEPARTMENT. ANY LEADS?

NUFF

YEAH, I DID SOME NOSING AROUND.

ONE GUY I TALKED TO, HE TOLD ME IT WAS *ROARK* RUNNING THE SHOW.

THAT'S GOT TO BE BULLSHIT.

JUST TELLING *YOU* WHAT I BEEN TOLD

WHUFF

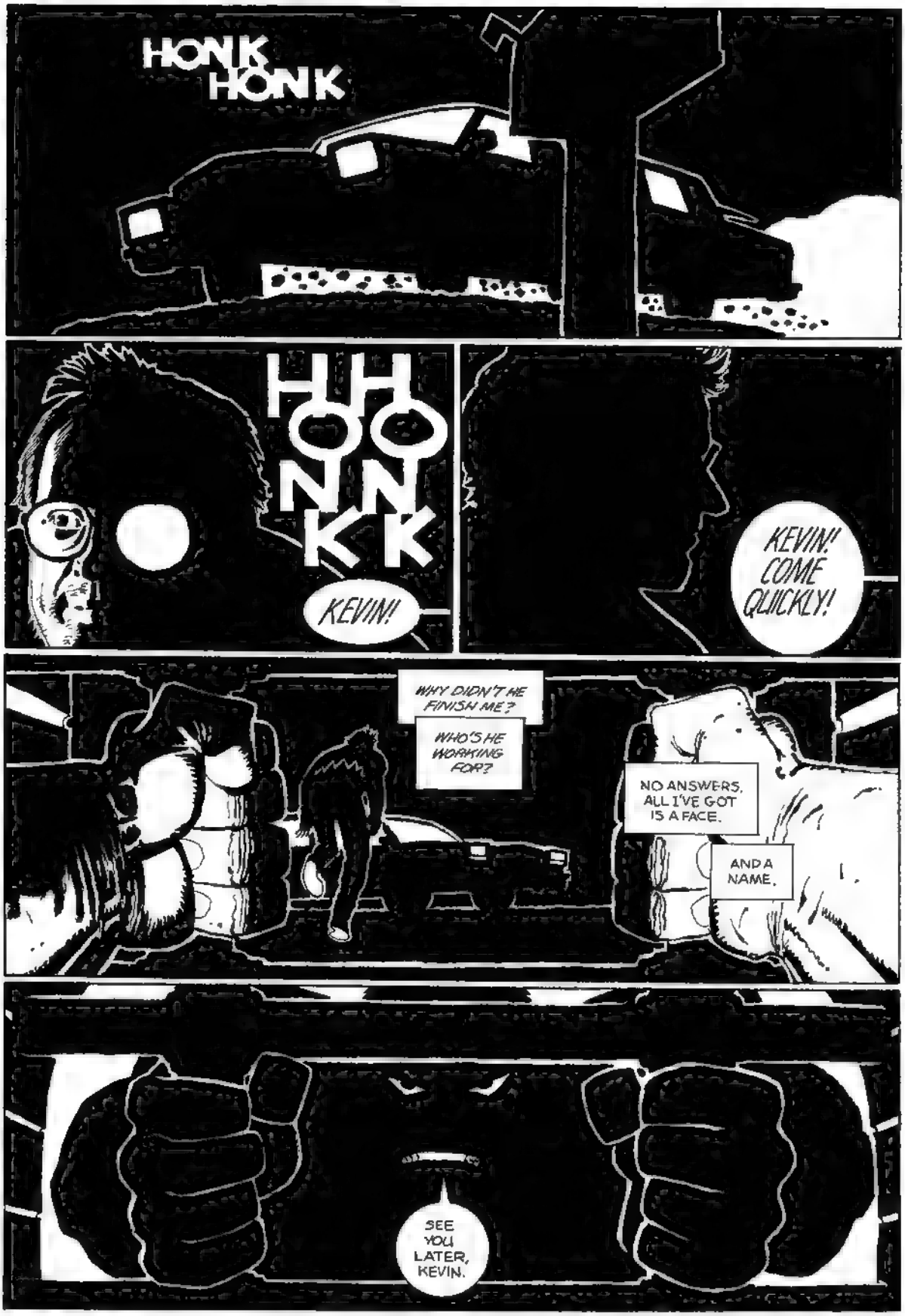
WELL, WHOEVER IT IS, HE KNEW I WAS CHECKING OUT THAT HOOKER ALMOST BEFORE I DID

WHAT HOOKER?

THE ONE *YOU'VE* BEEN OBSESSING OVER THE DEAD ONE.

GOLDIE

I DIDN'T KNOW SHE WAS A HOOKER. IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE ABOUT ANYTHING. BUT I DIDN'T KNOW THAT ABOUT HER
SHE WAS VERY HIGH-CLASS STUFF. TOP DOLLAR. SHE MUST'VE SHOWN YOU QUITE A TIME.
LET'S NOT TALK ABOUT THAT, OKAY? TELL ME ABOUT HIM THE BUM WHO SNUCK INTO MY ROOM AND KILLED GOLDIE AND DID WHAT HE DID TO YOU.
WHUFF
DAMN...
...I NEVER KNEW WHAT HIT ME. I WAS WALKING TO MY CAR. THAT'S ALL I CAN REMEMBER. THEN I WAS IN HIS KITCHEN I WAS PARALYZED. I SMELLED MEAT COOKING
HE'D CUT IT OFF BEFORE I WOKE UP MY HAND, I MEAN. IT DIDN'T EVEN HURT
THEN HE MADE ME WATCH, LIKE I TOLD YOU.
HOLD ON. QUIET.
THERE'S A CAR COMING
V-8 ENGINE. COMING FAST.


HONK HONK
HHOONNKK
KEVIN!
KEVIN! COME QUICKLY!
WHY DIDN'T HE FINISH ME?
WHO'S HE WORKING FOR?
NO ANSWERS, ALL I'VE GOT IS A FACE.
AND A NAME.
SEE YOU LATER, KEVIN.

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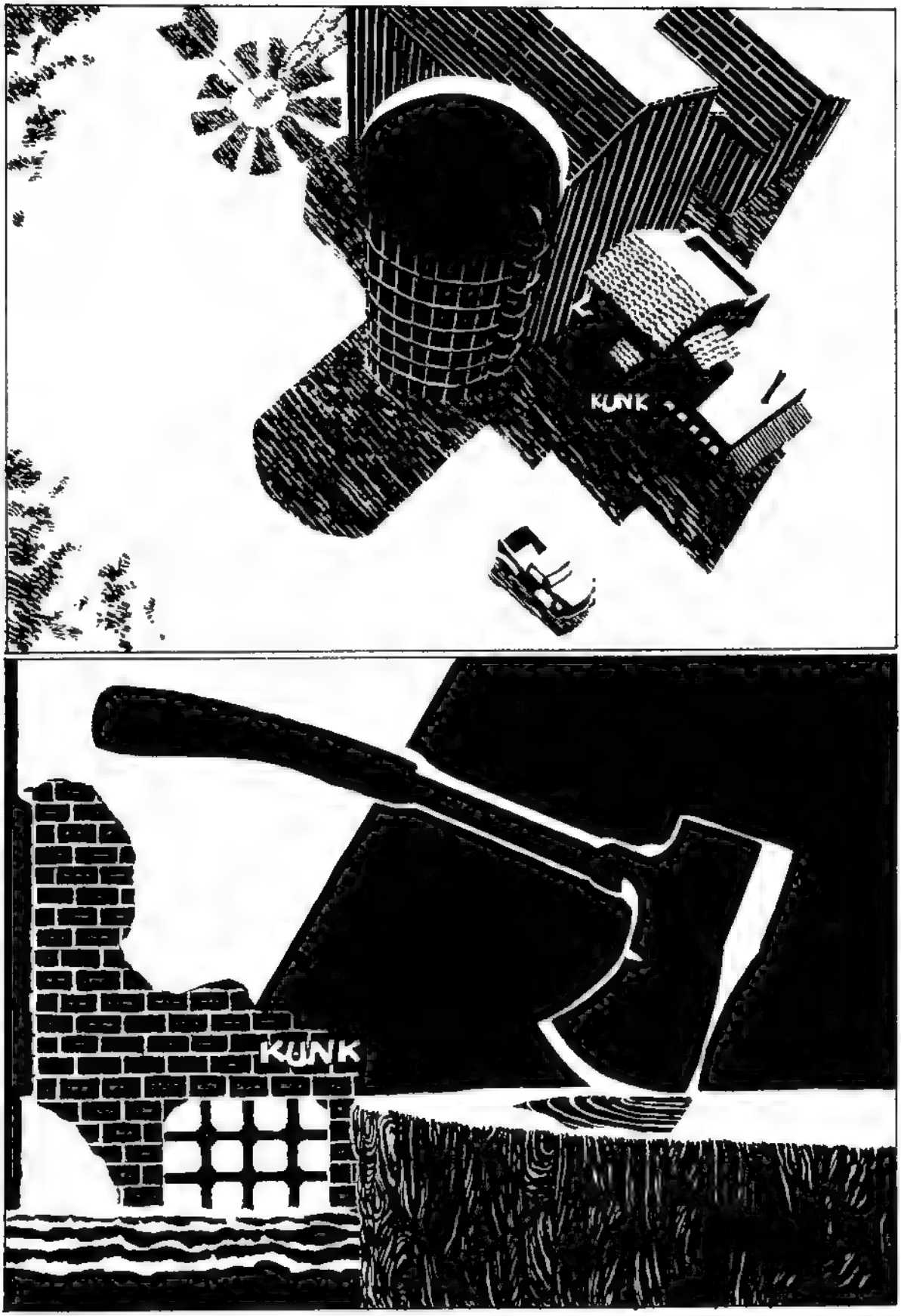
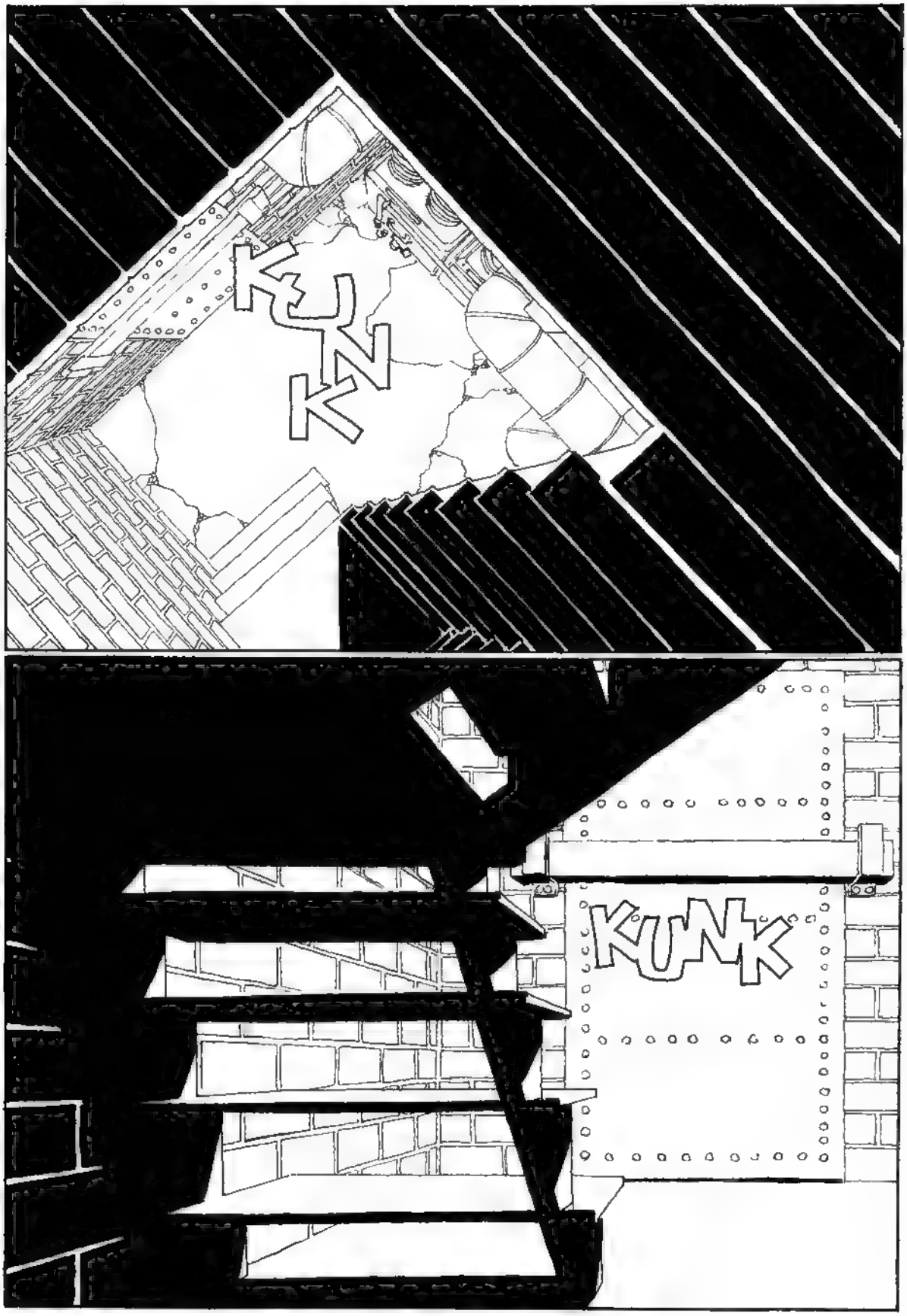

KUNK
KUNK


KUNK
KUNK

KUNKK
GRR
KUNKK
WHUFF
KUNKK
HOOF
WHUD

GRAAA

HJRF

HEFF
HEFF
HEFF

KUNK
CHIKK

KRUK
CRASH

LET'S GO.
FOR A SECOND IT'S ALMOST LIKE SHE'S SCARED TO LEAVE CRAZY, BUT AREN'T THEY ALL.
DAMES, I MEAN
RAKKA RAKKA RAKKA RAKKA RAKKA RAKKA RAKKA
RAKKA RAKKA RAKKA

POLICE
RAKKA
RAKKA
RAKKA

...THEY'RE DONE CHECKING THE HOUSE. THEY'RE COMING THIS WAY...BASTARDS. I'LL SHOW THEM...

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET EITHER OF US KILLED, MARV
NO! DON'T SHOOT-
--PLEASE LISTEN TO ME I'M HIS PAROLE OFFICER -

--HE'S UNCONSCIOUS AND UNARMED. HERE, TAKE HIS GUN.
THANK YOU, MA'AM WHERE IS HE?
KEFF
KURFF

SO THERE'S NO REASON TO KILL HIM
YES, THERE IS, MA'AM-- ONCE HE'S TOLD US WHO ELSE HE'S SPOKEN TO
WHAT?
BREKK
BREKK

BREKK
EXCUSE ME, CAPTAIN, BUT THE TARGET --HE'S NOT WHERE SHE SAID.
BREKK
THERE'S NO SIGN OF HIM

HERE'S A SIGN.
GHAAA
CHUK

PUNT
OOF!
BREEK
BREEK
PAK

FEAR

BREKK
GHUGG

CHAK

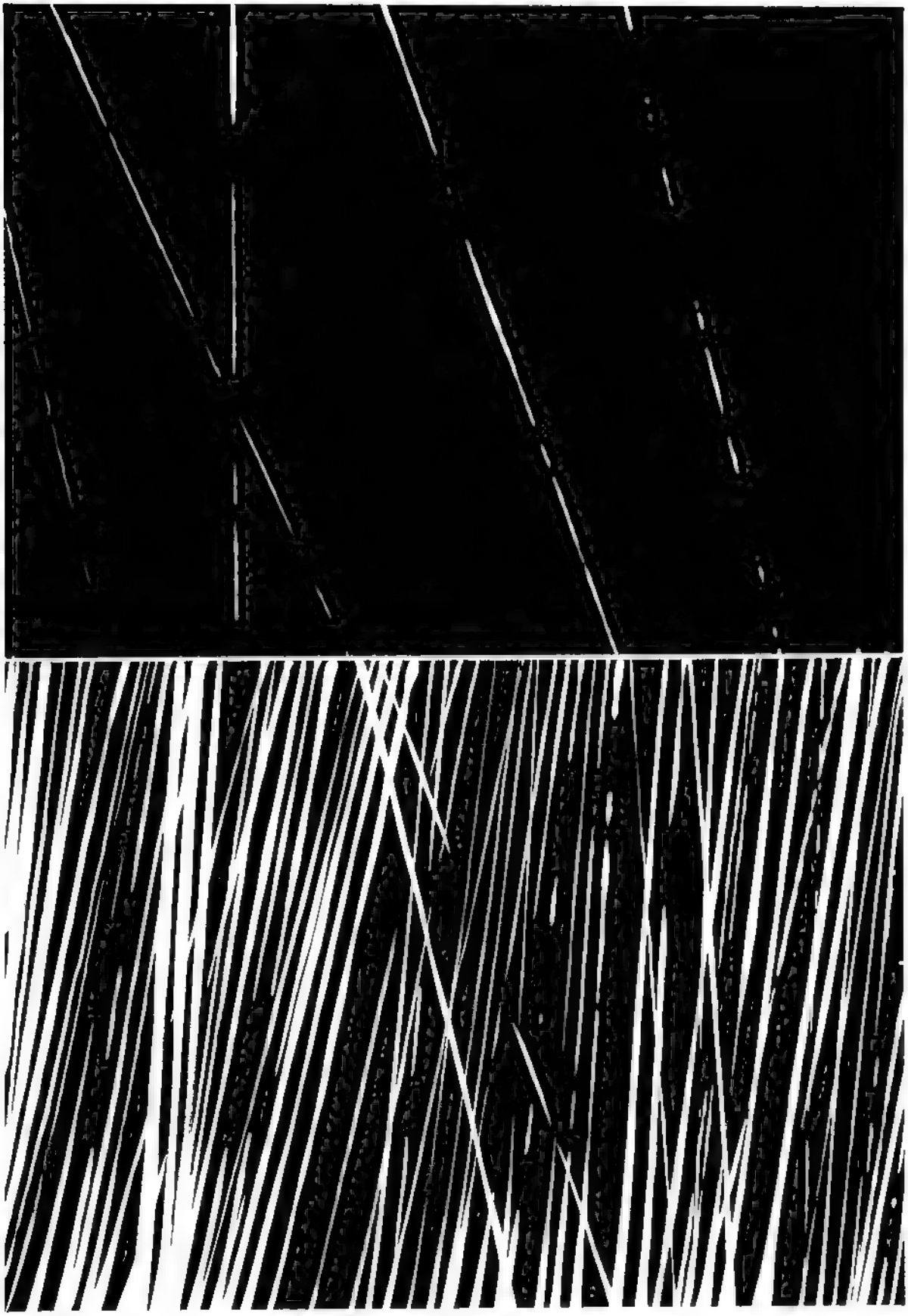
WHFF
BREKK
BREKK

GAK
BREKK
CHAK

KLICK
KLICK
KLICK
NOW THAT THERE ...
..THAT THERE IS ONE DAMN FINE COAT YOU'RE WEARING.

HA
HA HA HA
HA HA HA
HA HA
HA HA HA
HA HA HA
HA HA HA
HA HA

FM
8



RAIN DOESN'T COME TO SIN CITY REAL OFTEN. AND WHEN IT DOES, IT'S USUALLY PRETTY LAME STUFF. WARM AS SWEAT AND LUCKY IF IT GETS TO THE PAVEMENT BEFORE IT EVAPORATES.

BUT MAYBE TWICE A YEAR THE DESERT SKY REALLY COUGHS IT UP AND SPITS IT OUT. A COLD, MEAN TORRENT THAT TURNS THE STREETS TO GLASS AND CHILLS YOU TO THE BONE.

MOST PEOPLE HATE THE RAIN WHEN IT'S NASTY LIKE THIS. BUT ME, I LOVE IT. IT HELPS ME THINK.

I'M NOT REAL SMART, BUT I FEEL A WHOLE LOT SMARTER WHEN EVERYTHING GOES SLICK AND EVERYBODY SKITTERS OFF THE STREETS AND GETS OUT OF MY WAY

I LOVE THE RAIN. I LOVE THE ICY WAY IT CREEPS DOWN MY NECK THE WAY THE AIR GOES ELECTRIC AND EVERYTHING SEEMS SO CLEAR.

YOU BREATHE IN AND YOUR NOSTRILS WORK

THAT'S WHAT I DO. I BREATHE IN AND I JUST LET MY FEET TAKE ME WHEREVER THEY WANT.

AND I THINK

MY EYES STILL WATCH OUT FOR A SQUAD CAR OR A BEAT COP BUT MY BRAIN GOES OFF ON ITS OWN, DEEP INSIDE, SPREADING OUT THE PUZZLE PIECES ONE MORE TIME, TRYING TO FIND TWO THAT'LL FIT TOGETHER, LOOKING FOR SOME HINT OF THE BIG PICTURE

BUT MOSTLY I KEEP COMING BACK TO THAT COP I JUST KILLED AND WHAT HE TOLD ME.

HE WAS A TOUGH ONE AND I WAS PRETTY STEAMED ABOUT WHAT HE DONE TO LUCILLE ANYWAY SO I TOOK MY TIME WITH THE SON OF A BITCH IT WASN'T UNTIL I SHOWED HIM ALL THOSE PIECES OF HIMSELF THAT HE SAID WHAT HE SAID THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN HE WAS THE ONE DOING THE LAUGHING BECAUSE HE SAW THE LOOK ON MY FACE AND HE DIED KNOWING I WISHED TO GOD HE KEPT HIS MOUTH SHUT AFTER ALL

IT WAS JUST A NAME BUT I HAVEN'T STOPPED SHAKING SINCE I HEARD IT. AND THE RAIN ISN'T THE REASON I'M SHAKING, EITHER.

JUST A NAME BACK WHEN THE PRIEST SAID IT I FIGURED HE WAS JERKING MY CHAIN BUT HEARING IT FROM THE COP I KNEW IT COULDN'T BE A COINCIDENCE

JUST A NAME

NAME

EVERY INCH OF ME WANTS TO TURN TAIL TO SNEAK INTO THE BACK OF A TRUCK OR HOP A FREIGHT CAR AND HAUL OUT OF TOWN. I WANT TO RUN, RUN LIKE HELL, TO CRAWL INTO A CAVE SOMEWHERE AND FORGET ABOUT GOLDIE AND LUCILLE AND SILENT, DEADLY KEVIN.

ROARK. DAMN IT.

I'M AS GOOD AS DEAD.

I'M AS GOOD AS DEAD.

AND IT'S NOT THAT I'M ANY KIND OF HERO THAT MAKES ME STAY. HEROES DON'T GO WEAK IN THE KNEES AND FEEL LIKE THROWING UP OR CURLING UP INTO A LITTLE BALL AND CRYING LIKE A BABY.

AND EVEN THOUGH MY LIFE WOULD BE NOTHING BUT AN ENDLESS GREY HELL OF BOOZE AND BRAWLS LIKE IT WAS BEFORE, I'M MORE SCARED OF DYING THAN I AM OF LIVING

NO, I'M NO HERO. NOT BY A LONG SHOT. I JUST KNOW GOLDIE WON'T LET ME OFF SO EASY NO MATTER WHERE I GO I'LL SMELL HER ANGEL SMELL, I'LL SEE THAT MOUTH AND THOSE EYES AND THAT PERFECT, PERFECT BODY I'LL HEAR HER AND I'LL TASTE HER AND I'LL KNOW IT WAS ME, ONLY ME, WHO COULD HAVE SET THINGS RIGHT.

YOU WERE SCARED, WEREN'T YOU, GOLDIE? SOMEBODY WANTED YOU DEAD AND YOU KNEW IT SO YOU HIT THE SALOONS, THE BAD PLACES, LOOKING FOR THE BIGGEST, MEANEST LUG AROUND AND FINDING ME.

LOOKING FOR PROTECTION AND PAYING FOR IT WITH YOUR BODY AND MORE --WITH LOVE, WITH WILD FIRE, MAKING ME FEEL LIKE A KING, LIKE A DAMN WHITE KNIGHT.

LIKE A HERO.

WHAT A LAUGH.

YOU WANTED ME TO KEEP YOU SAFE BUT WHEN THAT BASTARD CAME TO KILL YOU I WAS STONE DRUNK.

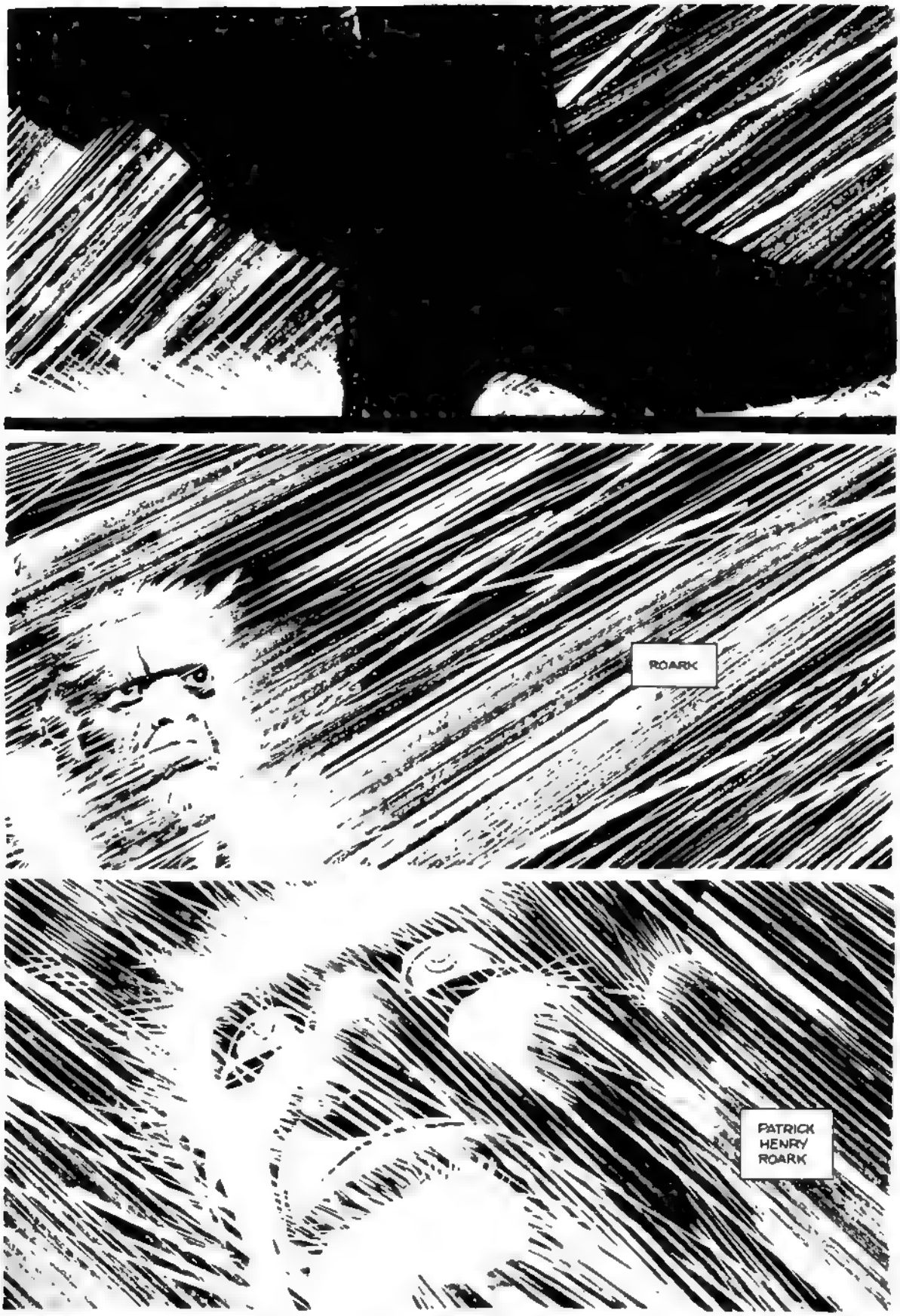
BLACKED OUT

USELESS

I OWE YOU, GOLDIE. I OWE YOU AND I'M GOING TO PAY UP. SO GOING AFTER ROARK MEANS DYING, WIN OR LOSE. HELL, DYING WILL BE NOTHING. I'LL DIE LAUGHING IF I KNOW I'VE DONE THIS ONE THING RIGHT.

BUT FIRST I HAVE TO KNOW THE WHY OF IT. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ROARK AND YOU, AND THE FARM-BOY CANNIBAL WHO KILLED YOU.

THEN I'LL KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TO DO AND WHO TO DO IT TO.


ROARK
PATRICK
HENRY
ROARK

"SAINT PATRICK," THEY CALL HIM BUT IT'S JUST A NICKNAME. THE POPE HASN'T GOTTEN AROUND TO MAKING IT OFFICIAL. NOT YET, ANYWAY.

THE ROARK FAMILY HAS OWNED SIN CITY SINCE THE DAYS OF WAGON TRAINS AND SIX-GUNS. OVER THE GENERATIONS THEIR MILLIONS HAVE GROWN TO BILLIONS. THEY'RE KIND OF LIKE OUR OWN ROYAL FAMILY.

THIS PARTICULAR GENERATION PRODUCED A UNITED STATES SENATOR, A STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL--AND PATRICK HENRY ROARK.

CARDINAL ROARK.

BACK IN SCHOOL THE SISTERS WOULD NEVER SHUT UP ABOUT HIM. MAN OF THE CLOTH. WAR HERO IN THE MEDICAL CORPS. PHILANTHROPIST. EDUCATOR. COULD'VE BECOME PRESIDENT BUT HE CHOSE TO SERVE GOD.

AND ALONG THE WAY HE JUST HAPPENED TO BECOME THE MOST POWERFUL MAN IN THE STATE. HE'S BROUGHT DOWN MAYORS AND GOTTEN GOVERNORS ELECTED.

AND HERE HE'S GOING TO GET KILLED IN THE NAME OF A DEAD HOOKER.

I'M GETTING USED TO THE IDEA.

MORE AND MORE I'M LIKING THE SOUND OF IT.

BLAM

KNKK

HA HA HA HA HA HA
GOOD GIRL.

THEN IT HITS ME LIKE A KICK IN THE NUTS. WHAT IF I'M WRONG?
I'VE GOT A CONDITION. I GET CONFUSED SOMETIMES. AND WITH LUCILLE DEAD I CAN'T GET MY MEDICINE
WHAT IF I'M IMAGINING THINGS? LIKE I DID WHEN I THOUGHT GOLDIE ATTACKED ME AFTER SHE WAS ALREADY DEAD?
WHAT IF I IMAGINED ALL OF THIS? FROM GOLDIE'S SLOW SMILE TO THE COP FINGERING ROARK? WHAT IF I'VE FINALLY TURNED INTO WHAT THEY ALWAYS SAID I WAS GOING TO TURN INTO--A MANIAC, A PSYCHO KILLER?
CAN'T KILL A MAN WITHOUT KNOWING FOR SURE YOU OUGHT TO.
I'VE GOT TO KNOW FOR SURE

THE RAIN'S SPUTTERED TO A STOP AND THE STREETS HAVE COME BACK TO LIFE BY THE TIME I MAKE MY WAY TO OLD TOWN.

THE MERCHANDISE IS ON DISPLAY, NEVER MIND THE COLD. PRETTY SOON EVERYTHING FROM PICKUPS TO LIMOS WILL BE PULLING IN AND BUSINESS WILL BE BOOMING.

OLD TOWN IS WHY NOBODY CALLS THIS BURG "BASIN CITY" LIKE IT SAYS ON THE MAPS.

IT WAS SAINT PATRICK'S GREAT-GRANDFATHER WHO MADE IT HAPPEN. BACK THEN THIS WAS A GOLD RUSH TOWN ON ITS WAY TO BECOMING A GHOST TOWN.

THEN OLD MAN ROARK GOT HIMSELF AN IDEA.

HE SPENT EVERY SILVER DOLLAR HE HAD, IMPORTING TOP HOOKERS FROM FRANCE AND PLACES LIKE THAT.

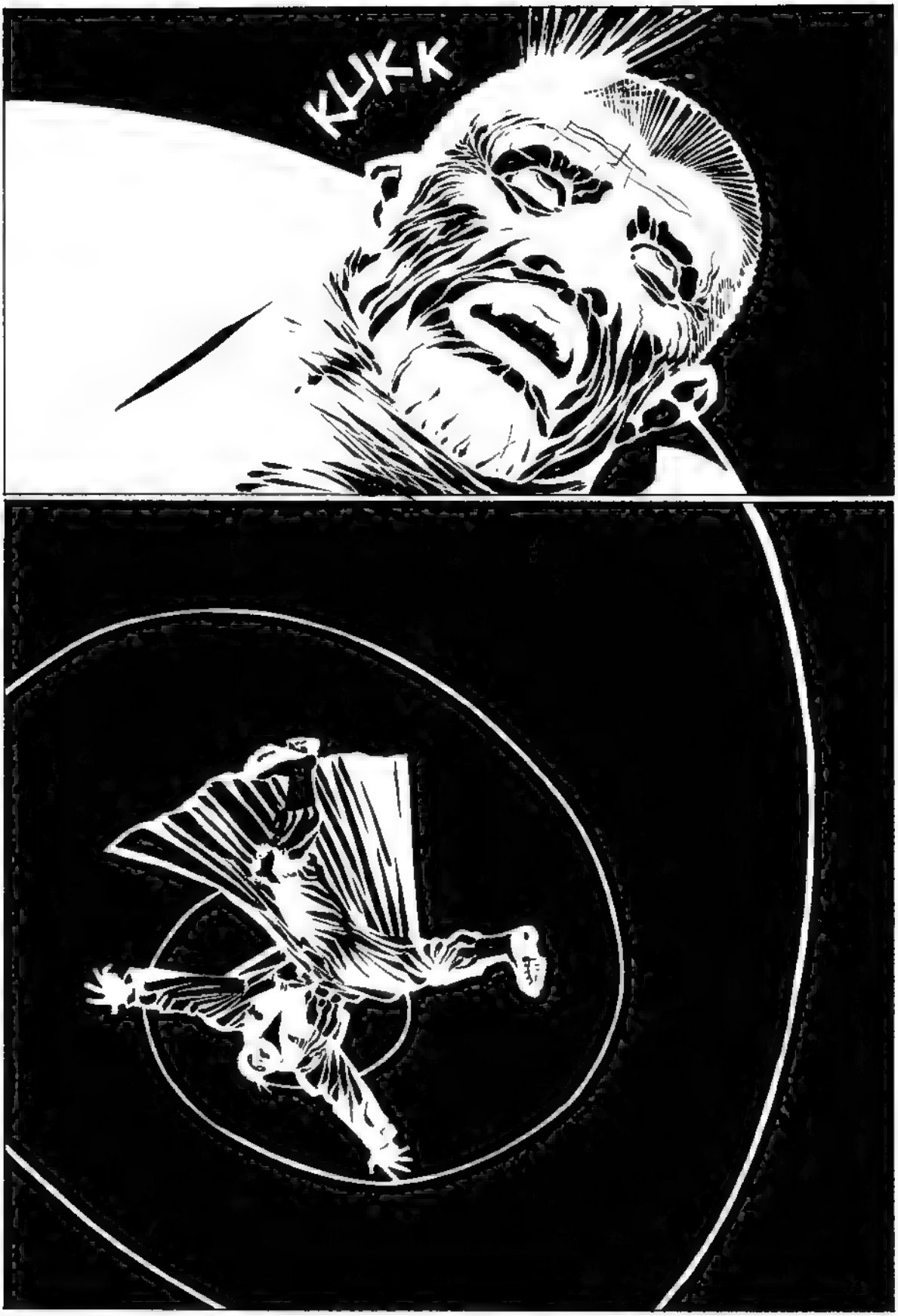
WORD GOT OUT AND PRETTY SOON SIN CITY WAS THE HOTTEST STOP IN THE WEST. PEOPLE WOULD COME FROM MILES AROUND.

THEY STILL DO AND IT'S EASY TO SEE WHY. OLD TOWN'S KEPT ITS TRADITIONS, HANDED DOWN FROM GORGEOUS MOTHER TO GORGEOUS DAUGHTER.

FOR AN HOUR OR SO I ASK AROUND ABOUT GOLDIE. I DON'T GET ANY ANSWERS BUT I KNOW I'M BOUND TO. LUCILLE SAID GOLDIE WAS A HOOKER AND IF SHE WAS SHE HAS ROOTS HERE. FRIENDS.

MAYBE EVEN FAMILY.

BLAM
GAA!
NO... NO!
YOU CAN'T BE GOLDIE! YOU CAN'T! GOLDIE'S DEAD!
BLAM


KUKK

KOFF
GOLDIE YEAH, SURE. RIGHT.
IT'S OKAY, GOLDIE. I GOT NOBODY TO BLAME BUT ME I BROUGHT ALL THIS ON MYSELF AND THERE'S NO USE DENYING IT. I HAVEN'T HAD ANYTHING TO EAT OR GOTTEN ANY SLEEP OR TAKEN MY MEDICINE FOR DAYS NOW. SO IT'S NO WONDER I'M SEEING THINGS, IS IT?

I'M NO BRAIN SURGEON, BUT I'M SMART ENOUGH TO KNOW IT WHEN I'M CRAZY. R GHT NOW I'M PROBABLY LYING IN A GUTTER SOMEPLACE TALKING TO MYSELF. ALL I KNOW FOR SURE IS I DON'T KNOW NOTHING ABOUT NOTHING. BUT I DON'T CARE BECAUSE IF YOU CAN'T TRUST WHAT YOU SEE THERE'S NO CALL TO TAKE ANYTHING SERIOUSLY.
BASTARD!
KRAKK
wAGG

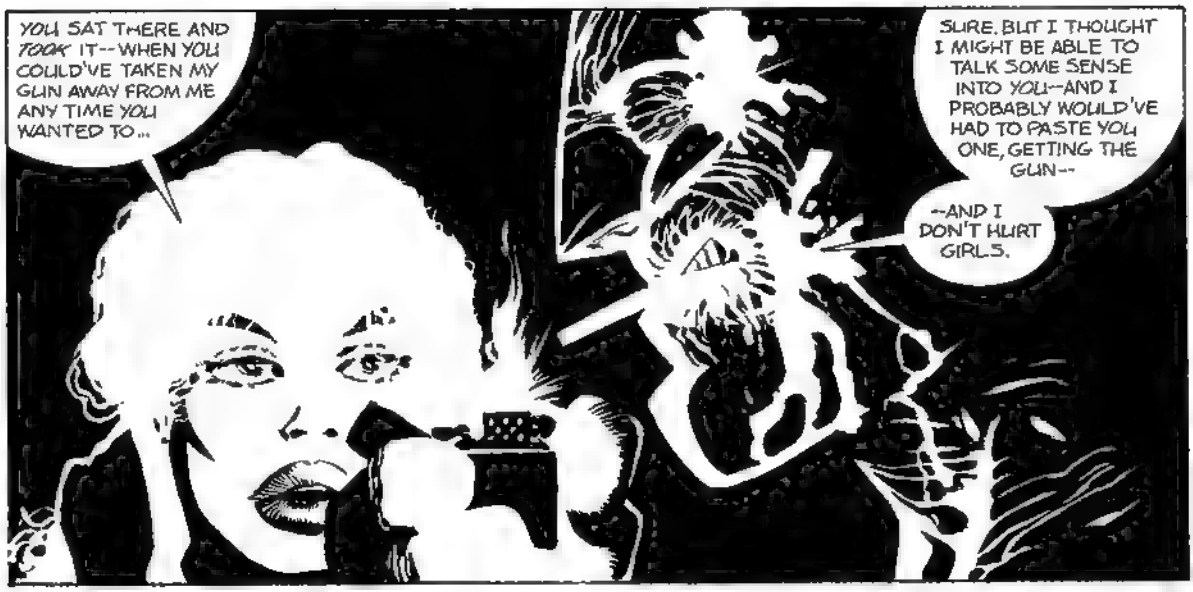
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
SON OF A BITCH...
HE'S CRAZY
HE'S FAKING IT HIT HIM AGAIN, WENDY HARDER
KRAKK

YOU SHOULDN'T OUGHT TO HIT ME THAT WAY, GOLDIE. WITH THE BARREL, I MEAN. YOU'LL KNOCK IT OUT OF WHACK AND THE GUN'LL BE USELESS. IF YOU'RE GOING TO PISTOL-WHIP SOMEBODY, DO IT RIGHT AND USE THE HANDLE LIKE YOU DID THE FIRST TIME.
KR AKK
WAIT A MINUTE. JUST HOLD ON A SECOND. WHY'D SHE CALL YOU "WENDY"?

BECAUSE THAT'S MY NAME, YOU APE! GOLDIE WAS MY SISTER! MY TWIN SISTER!
I GUESS SHE WAS THE NICE ONE.
KRAKK
KRAKK
HARDER!
KRAKK
YOU'RE GOING TO DIE, MISTER BUT FIRST YOU'RE GOING TO TALK. GOLDIE AND THE OTHER SIX-- WHERE ARE THEY? WHAT DID YOU DO TO THEM?
YOU CRAZY GOD DAMNED BROAD! YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG! JUST TAKE A LOOK AT THIS MUG! LOOK AT IT! WOULD ANY OF YOU DAMES LET ME GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO YOU TO KILL YOU?

DAMN STRAIGHT YOU WOULDN'T! NONE OF YOU WOULD BUT GOLDIE, AND SHE ONLY DID BECAUSE SHE THOUGHT I COULD PROTECT HER. BUT I GOT TOO DRUNK SO I COULDN'T.
AND I'LL BET THE COPS DIDN'T DO A DAMN THING ABOUT THOSE OTHER GIRLS, DID THEY? DAMN STRAIGHT THEY DIDN'T! BUT AS SOON AS THEY HAD ME FOR A FALL GUY THEY SHOWED UP GUNS BLAZING!
BUT THEY DIDN'T GET ME AND I BEEN KILLING MY WAY TO THE TRUTH EVER SINCE AND I'M GETTING DAMN CLOSE TO IT SO GO AHEAD, DOLL SHOOT ME NOW OR GET THE HELL OUT OF MY WAY
OH, NUTS

OKAY. I'M GLAD WE GOT ALL THAT SORTED OUT.
WHAT THE HELL...
NO! I TIED THOSE KNOTS--AND THAT'S MY SPECIALTY!


YOU SAT THERE AND TOOK IT--WHEN YOU COULD'VE TAKEN MY GUN AWAY FROM ME ANY TIME YOU WANTED TO...
SURE. BUT I THOUGHT I MIGHT BE ABLE TO TALK SOME SENSE INTO YOU--AND I PROBABLY WOULD'VE HAD TO PASTE YOU ONE, GETTING THE GUN--
--AND I DON'T HURT GIRLS.

9

HUHff

I WIPE THE BLOOD OFF AND I TAKE A DEEP BREATH AND I TAKE A GOOD LONG LOOK AT THE MONSTER IN THE MIRROR.

DON'T SCREW UP THIS TIME, MARV. IT'S TOO IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW. WHILE YOU'RE ALONE, FEEL THE FEAR AND GET PAST IT. GO AHEAD SHAKE LIKE A JUNKIE. LET YOUR HEART CRAWL UP YOUR THROAT. LET YOUR STOMACH SQUEEZE ITSELF INTO A GOLF BALL, INTO ONE OF THOSE BLACK HOLES THAT SUCKS EVERYTHING INTO IT.

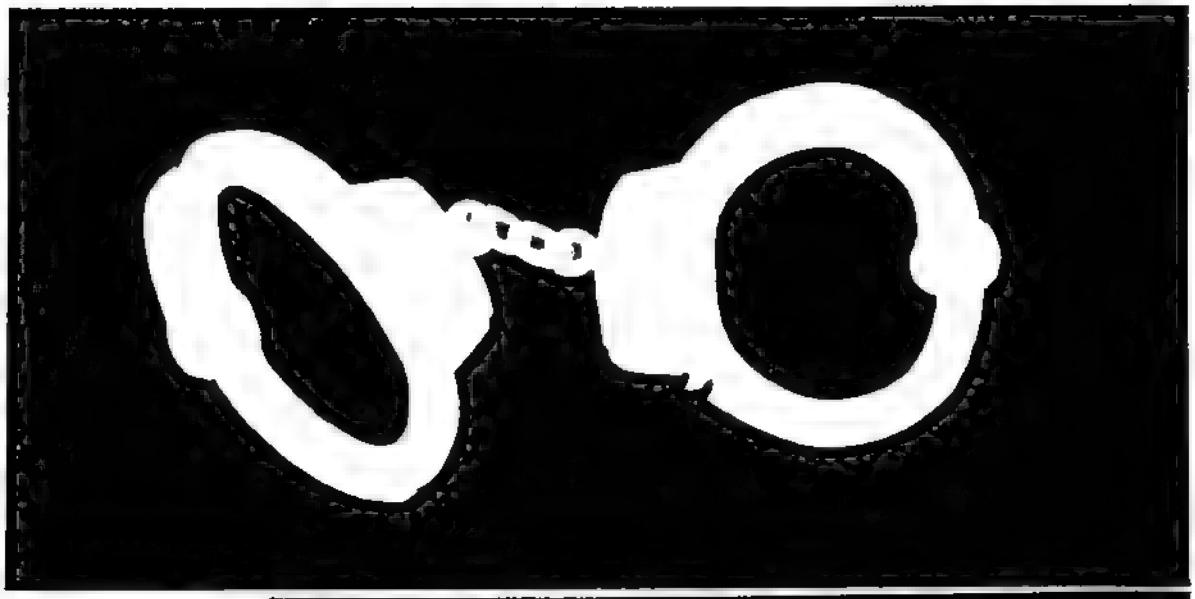
THINK ABOUT DYING. THINK HARD. PICTURE IT. A BULLET THROUGH YOUR BRAIN AND THAT'S IF YOU'RE LUCKY, GETTING IT THAT QUICK

BUT IT'S JUST AS LIKELY GOING TO BE THE SLOW WAY A LONG, BAD JOKE OF A TRIAL AND A LONGER WAIT IN A CELL UNTIL THEY STRAP YOU INTO THAT CHAIR AND A MILLION VOLTS SEND *YOU* STRAIGHT TO HELL. AND THEY'LL CALL YOU A PSYCHO KILLER WHO GOT WHAT WAS COMING TO HIM.

PICTURE IT. FEEL IT. GET USED TO IT. THEN PUT IT BACK INSIDE WHERE IT BELONGS. YOU'VE GOT SOME PEOPLE TO KILL. AND IF YOU DO IT RIGHT IT WON'T MATTER WHAT ANYBODY SAYS. YOU'LL GO TO YOUR GRAVE A WINNER

I THROW UP A COUPLE OF TIMES AND THEN I'M READY

I NEED A PAIR OF HANDCUFFS.
WHAT STYLE YOU WANT? I GOT A COLLECTION
JUST GIVE HIM THE ONES YOU'VE GOT WITH YOU, GAIL.



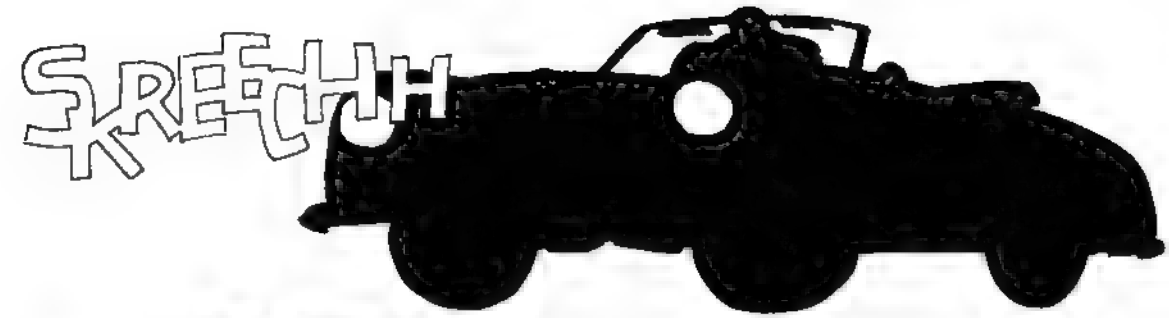
I TRY NOT TO LOOK AT HER TOO MUCH. IT MAKES IT WORSE WHEN I DO. BUT WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES FOR TOO LONG IT HAPPENS ANYWAY. I GET CONFUSED AND START THINKING SHE'S GOLDIE. SHE'S GOT THE SMELL AND THE VOICE. JUST LIKE SHE'S GOT THE LOOKS. EVERYTHING'S TELLING ME SHE'S GOLDIE AND I HAVE TO KEEP REMINDING MYSELF SHE ISN'T. GOLDIE'S DEAD AND THE ANGEL SITTING NEXT TO ME, SHE'S WENDY. GOLDIE'S TWIN SISTER.

AND SHE'S ONE TOUGH BIRD. SHE'S BOUNCED ME AROUND A PARKING LOT WITH HER CUTE LITTLE PORSCHE. SHE'S SHOT ME AND PISTOL-WHIPPED ME AND IT TOOK SOME FAST TALKING TO KEEP HER FROM BLOWING MY BRAINS OUT.

SHE'S WENDY. GOLDIE'S TWIN SISTER.

I CAN'T LET MYSELF GET CONFUSED ABOUT THAT.

IT WAS A FARM BOY NAME OF KEVIN WHO KILLED GOLDIE. NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE H.M. KNOCKED ME FLAT. BUT IT'S ROARK WHO'S BEHIND IT AND I DON'T KNOW WHY. CARDINAL ROARK
ROARK. NO KIDDING.
KUMP



"GOLDIE WORKED THE CLERGY"...JUST LIKE THAT A WHOPPER OF A PUZZLE PIECE FALLS SMACK IN MY LAP I'M TOO DUMB TO PUT THE WHOLE PICTURE TOGETHER YET, BUT...

...BUT SHE FIRES UP TWO CIGARETTES AND HANDS ME ONE AND I TASTE HER LIPSTICK ON IT AND SUDDENLY MY HEART'S POUNDING SO LOUD I CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING ELSE I WANT TO CRY AND I WANT TO LAUGH AT THE CRAZINESS OF IT ALL BUT MOSTLY I WANT TO REACH OVER AND TOUCH HER AND TASTE GOLDIE'S SWEAT ONE MORE TIME.

BUT SHE ISN'T GOLDIE.

SKREECH
HONK DAMN!
HONK
SKREECH
SKREEEECH!!
...DID YOU SAY SOMETHING, WENDY?
SHE WAS MY SISTER. I LOVED HER. SO I'M IN THIS ONE TO THE END. BUT WHY YOU? WHY ARE YOU WILLING TO GO UP AGAINST ROARK FOR SOMEBODY YOU BARELY KNEW?

SHE WAS NICE TO ME
SHE WAS DESPERATE SHE NEEDED PROTECTION AND KNEW HOW TO KEEP YOU AROUND. IT DIDN'T WORK OUT. YOU DON'T OWE HER ANYTHING
SHE WAS NICE TO ME. SHE GAVE ME SOMETHING I DIDN'T KNOW EXISTED. I WASN'T NEVER EVEN ABLE TO BUY A WOMAN, THE WAY I LOOK
THE SUN'S COMING UP. WE BETTER GET OUT OF SIGHT. I KNOW A PLACE IT'S A DIVE BUT THEY KEEP THEIR MOUTHS SHUT TAKE EL REDONDO TO THE BRIDGE
YES, MARV

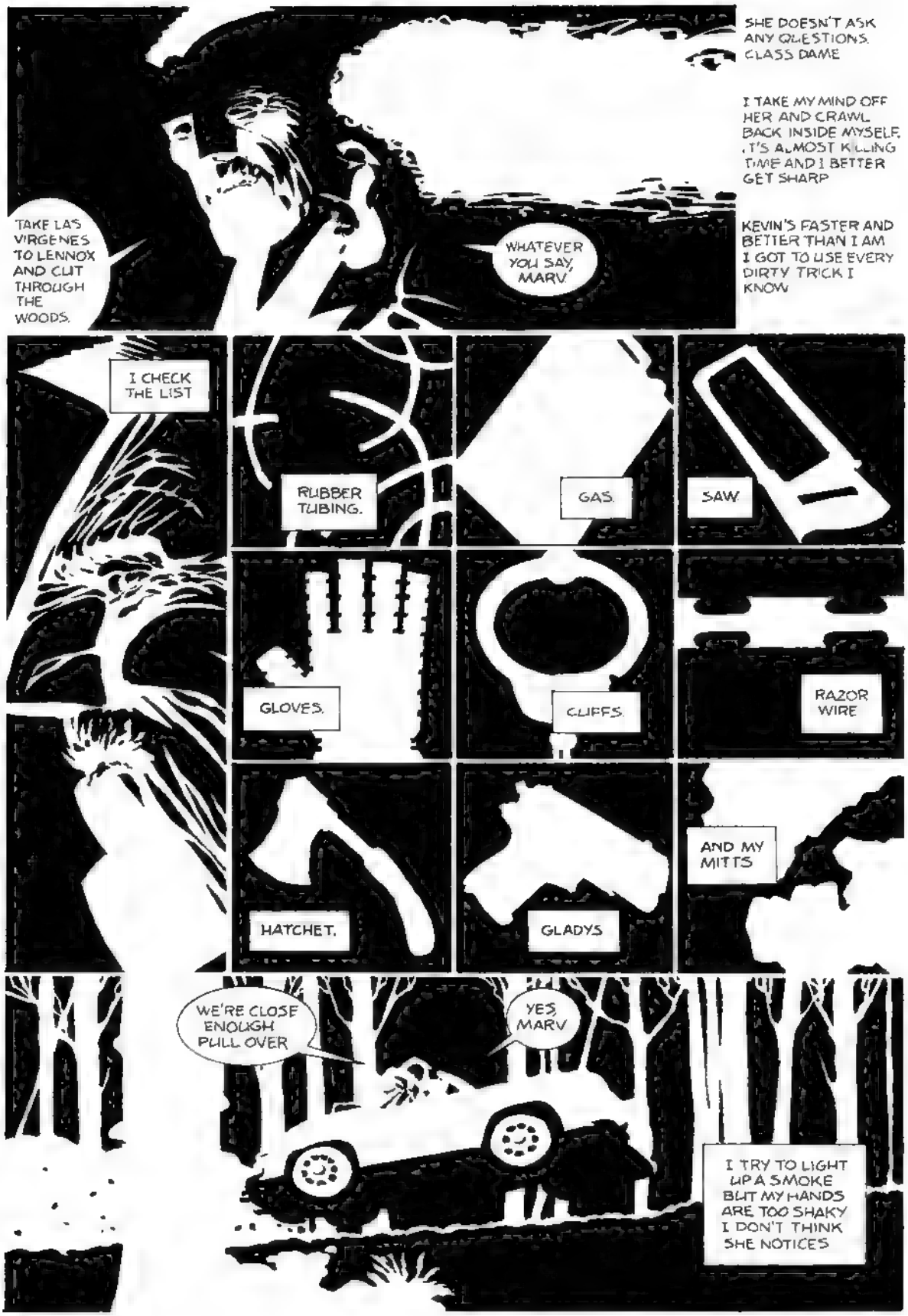
GOLDIE.
GOLDIE, BABY.
SLAP!
ULP! I'M SORRY, WENDY
IT'S ALL RIGHT, MARV BACK TO THE COUCH NOW
RIGHT I'M REALLY SORRY. I GET CONFUSED SOMETIMES
IT'S OKAY, MARV GET SOME SLEEP
I AM SUCH A JERK.

THE SUN GOES DOWN GOOD AND EARLY SO THE STORES ARE STILL OPEN. WENDY AND ME GO SHOPPING W TH HER MONEY.
YEAH THIS'LL DO. I'M ALSO GONNA BE NEEDING A DOZEN TWO-FOOT LENGTHS OF RUBBER TUBING AND A SPOOL OF RAZOR WIRE AND THOSE SPECIAL GLOVES THAT'LL LET ME HANDLE THE WIRE.
BEEFING UP THE OLD HOME SECURITY, HUH?
YOU SHOULDN'T OUGHT TO POKE YOUR NOSE INTO PEOPLE'S PRIVATE BUSINESS
STOP AT THE NEXT GAS STATION
BUT THE TANKS FULL..
.. OH NEVER MIND

WE BETTER GET MOVING. I THINK THAT GUY BACK THERE RECOGNIZED ME
YOU DO KIND OF STAND OUT.

LOOK WHO'S TALKING. YOU'RE HANGING OUT ALL OVER THE PLACE. YOU OUGHT TO TIE UP THAT BELT. IT ISN'T FAIR.

SHE PULLS HER BELT TIGHT. IT DOESN'T HELP


SHE DOESN'T ASK ANY QUESTIONS. CLASS DAME
I TAKE MY MIND OFF HER AND CRAWL BACK INSIDE MYSELF. IT'S ALMOST KILLING TIME AND I BETTER GET SHARP
KEVIN'S FASTER AND BETTER THAN I AM I GOT TO USE EVERY DIRTY TRICK I KNOW
TAKE LAS VIRGENES TO LENNOX AND CUT THROUGH THE WOODS.
WHATEVER YOU SAY, MARV.
I CHECK THE LIST
RUBBER TUBING.
GAS.
SAW
GLOVES.
CUFFS.
RAZOR WIRE
HATCHET.
GLADYS
AND MY MITTS
WE'RE CLOSE ENOUGH PULL OVER
YES, MARV
I TRY TO LIGHT UP A SMOKE BUT MY HANDS ARE TOO SHAKY I DON'T THINK SHE NOTICES

HER EYES ARE BURNING HOLES THROUGH ME BUT STILL SHE DOESN'T ASK SHE KNOWS I'M THE ONLY CHANCE SHE HAS.
STAY HERE KEEP THE ENGINE RUNNING IF I'M NOT BACK IN TWENTY MINUTES, GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE AND DON'T LOOK BACK
KILL HIM FOR ME, MARV KILL HIM GOOD
I WON'T LET YOU DOWN, GOLDIE I PROMISED

IT ISN'T LONG BEFORE I BREAK INTO A RUN. I CAN'T HELP MYSELF.

NO SHAKING, NOW. NO COLD SWEAT. NO DOUBTS. THE FEAR GOT OUT FOR A LITTLE WHILE THERE BUT NOW IT'S CRAWLED BACK IN, FAR AWAY, A SMALL COLD THING LOST IN A BELLY THAT'S FULL OF FIRE.

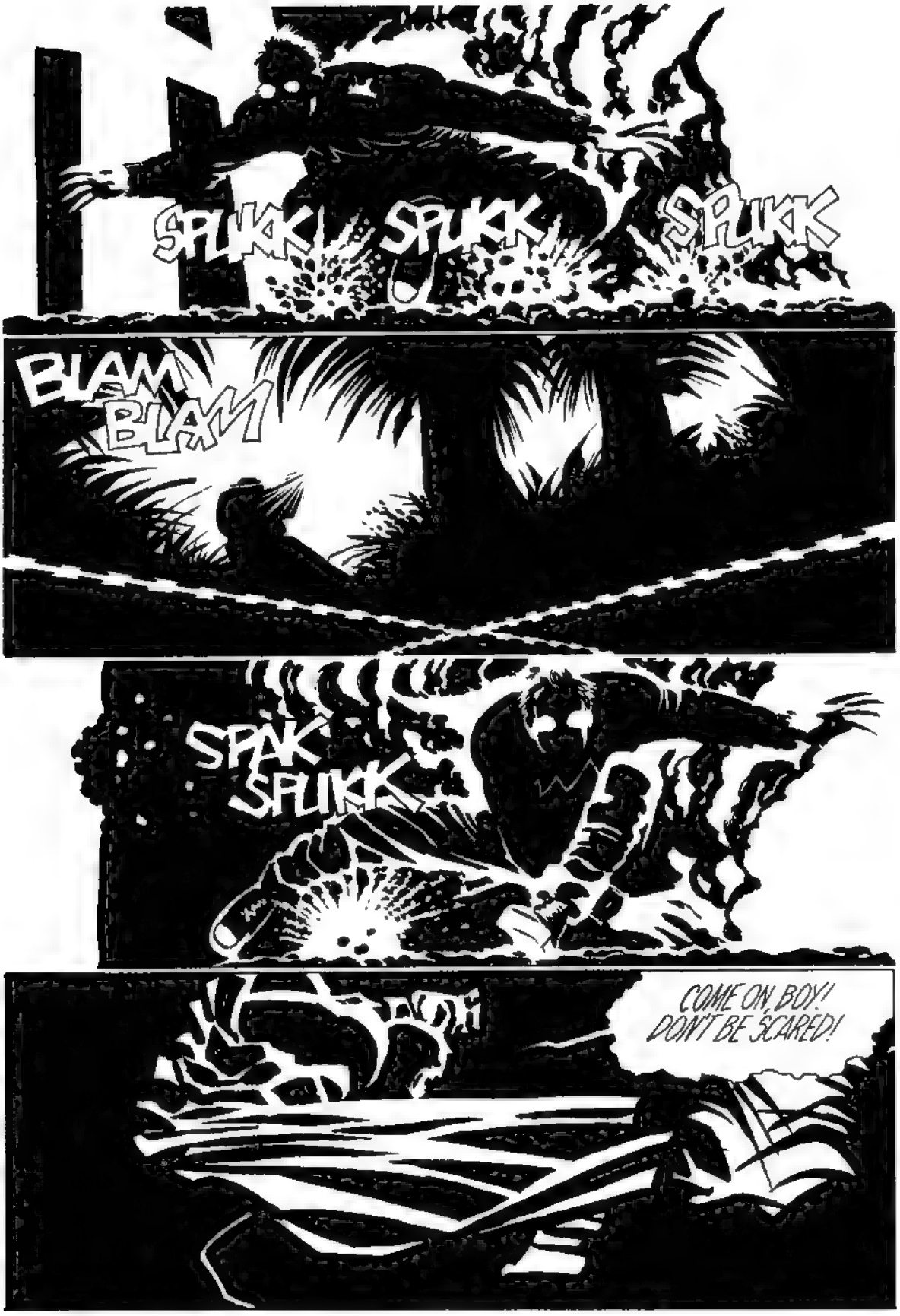
EVEN THE WOODS DON'T SCARE ME ANYMORE BECAUSE I'M JUST ONE MORE PREDATOR AND I'M BIGGER AND MEANER THAN THE REST.

ALL I'VE EVER BEEN GOOD AT IS KILLING SO I MIGHT AS WELL ENJOY IT.

I'M GAMBLING THAT NONE OF THEM THINK I'M DUMB ENOUGH TO COME AFTER THEM. THAT THEY TOLD KEVIN TO SIT TIGHT AND FIGURED I BUGGED OUT OF TOWN.
KEEK
KEVIN'S GOT TO STILL BE HERE HE'S GOT TO.
HE'S GOT TO.
EVEN WITH THE GLOVES ON I GOT TO BE CAREFUL WITH THE RAZOR WIRE.
I LOVE THIS STUFF. IT CUTS THROUGH MEAT AND BONE LIKE THEY WAS BUTTER.
KEEK
WENDY HAD ENOUGH MONEY FOR IT SO I THOUGHT IT WAS WORTH TRYING, ONCE I GOT THE IDEA

I TAKE THE GLOVES OFF AND GET THE GAS READY AND I WAIT AND WATCH THE HOUSE
HERE WE GO...
...HEADING DOWNSTAIRS.
TO THE KITCHEN.
GETTING HIMSELF A MIDNIGHT SNACK.
AND I CAN GUESS WHAT KIND.
CHIK

KASH
KASHH
KA SHH
ROCK
BLAM
BLAMM
BLAM
LIKE THAT, KEVIN?


SPLUKK
SPUKK
SPUKK
BLAM
BLAM
SPAK
SPUKK
COME ON BOY!
DON'T BE SCARED!

NOW--MY MOST IMPORTANT TRICK
THE CLIFFS.
COME ON COME ON COME ON, YOU SON OF A BITCH.
SNAP!
HE'S ALMOST TO THE WIRE
DON'T LOOK DOWN, BOY.
DAMN, HE'S SLICK

GRAAA
RIPP

HuRK

NGAA
PUNT
GEF
WHUG
HUKK

KHAF
IS THAT THE BEST YOU CAN DO, CREEP?
KHAF
KHAK
THAT'S RIGHT- GET PERSONAL- GET CLOSE -
--I CAN TAKE IT-

THAT'S RIGHT USE YOUR HANDS-- GET CLOSE--
--I CAN TAKE IT--
--I CAN TAKE IT--
GLAK
GRK
NEFF
WRIGGLING LIKE A SNAKE--
--STRONGER THAN I THOUGHT-
THOSE DAMN FINGERNAILS · BLOOD IN MY EYES--
--THAT'S ALL RIGHT--I WON'T NEED MY EYES--
HUGGN

SNAP!
GOT YOU, YOU BASTARD! LET'S SEE YOU HOP AROUND NOW!
KKKK
CHINK
GO AHEAD - I CAN TAKE IT--
- AND BLOOD IN MY EYES OR NOT--I CAN FIND YOU-
KEKK

FOR A WHILE I JUST TRY TO SLOW MY HEART DOWN AND BREATHE THE FIRE OUT OF MY LUNGS. MY MUSCLES MAKE ME A THOUSAND PROMISES OF PAIN TO COME IT'LL BE A ROUGH MORNING IF I'M ALIVE TO SEE IT.

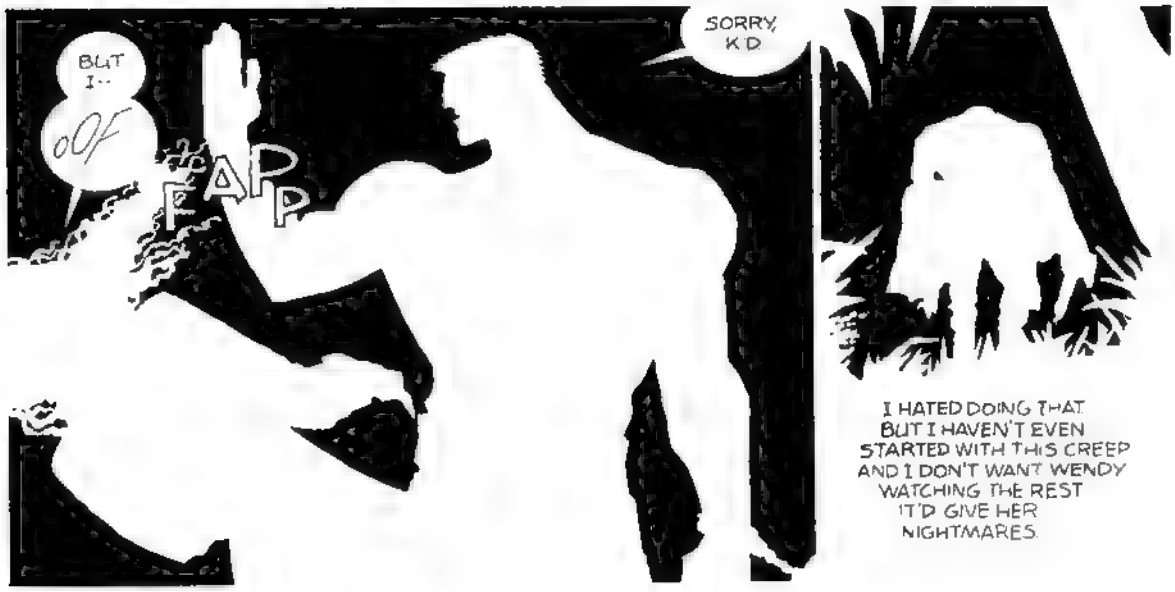
THE NIGHT'S ALL WEIRD AND QUIET SO QUIET THE CRICKETS SEEM LOUD.

KEFF

THEN THERE'S A GENTLE FLAP OF FABRIC AND LIGHT FOOTSTEPS ON THE GRASS

AND THAT SCENT.

LET ME DO IT, MARV SHE WAS MY SISTER LET ME FINISH HIM
YOU WASN'T SUPPOSED TO COME THIS WAY, WENDY YOU WAS SUPPOSED TO STAY WITH THE CAR


BUT I...
OOF
FAP
SORRY, K.D.
I HATED DOING THAT. BUT I HAVEN'T EVEN STARTED WITH THIS CREEP AND I DON'T WANT WENDY WATCHING THE REST. IT'D GIVE HER NIGHTMARES.

MAYBE A HALF HOUR LATER
I'LL TELL YOU, I AM GOOD AND BUSHED AND IT WASN'T OUR FIGHT THAT DID ME IN, EITHER. IT WAS ALL THAT *SAWING* AND *TYING*. IT'S NOT AS EASY AS IT LOOKS
BUT IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF, I THINK I DID A PRETTY NEAT JOB OF IT AND IT'S A GOOD THING I BOUGHT ALL THAT EXTRA *TUBING*. A LOT OF THEM *BROKE*--
--WHEN I WAS FIXING THE *TORNIQUETS*.
IT WOULD'VE BEEN A *MESS* AROUND HERE IF I HADN'T HAD SOME TO SPARE. STILL AND ALL, I GOT TO ADMIT THERE WAS A SPURT OR TWO
HELL, I MIGHT AS WELL COME CLEAN. I WANTED A SPURT OR TWO, TO GET THE SCENT IN THE A.R. TO GET A FRIEND OF *YOURS* TO COME RUNNING
GRRRRR
AND WHAT DO YOU KNOW. HERE HE COMES NOW
RRRRRRRR
LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS IF I LOOSEN UP ONE OF THESE HERE TORN.QUETS

RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR
RRRRRR
CHOMP
GOOD DOG. GOOD DOG.
HE DOESN'T SCREAM...

...NOT EVEN AT THE END.

NOT EVEN WHEN THE MUTT'S HAD HIS FILL AND KEVIN'S GUTS ARE LYING ALL OVER THE PLACE AND SOMEHOW THE BASTARD IS STILL ALIVE, STILL STARING AT ME

NOT EVEN WHEN I GRAB THE SAW AND FINISH THE JOB.

HE NEVER SCREAMS!

ON THE WAY BACK INTO TOWN I PULL OVER TO A TRUCK STOP AND USE THE PAY PHONE TO PUT IN A CALL TO KADIE'S AND ASK NANCY TO GET HER CLOTHES ON AND MEET ME AT HER PLACE SHE SAYS YES, LIKE ALWAYS

THERE ISN'T MUCH OF ANYTHING NANCY WOULDN'T DO FOR ME, NOT SINCE A YEAR BACK WHEN A FRAT BOY ROUGHED HER UP AND I STRAIGHTENED HIM OUT BUT GOOD. MAYBE I WENT A LITTLE TOO FAR, BUT I WAS PLENTY STEAMED, SEEING HER CRYING LIKE THAT.

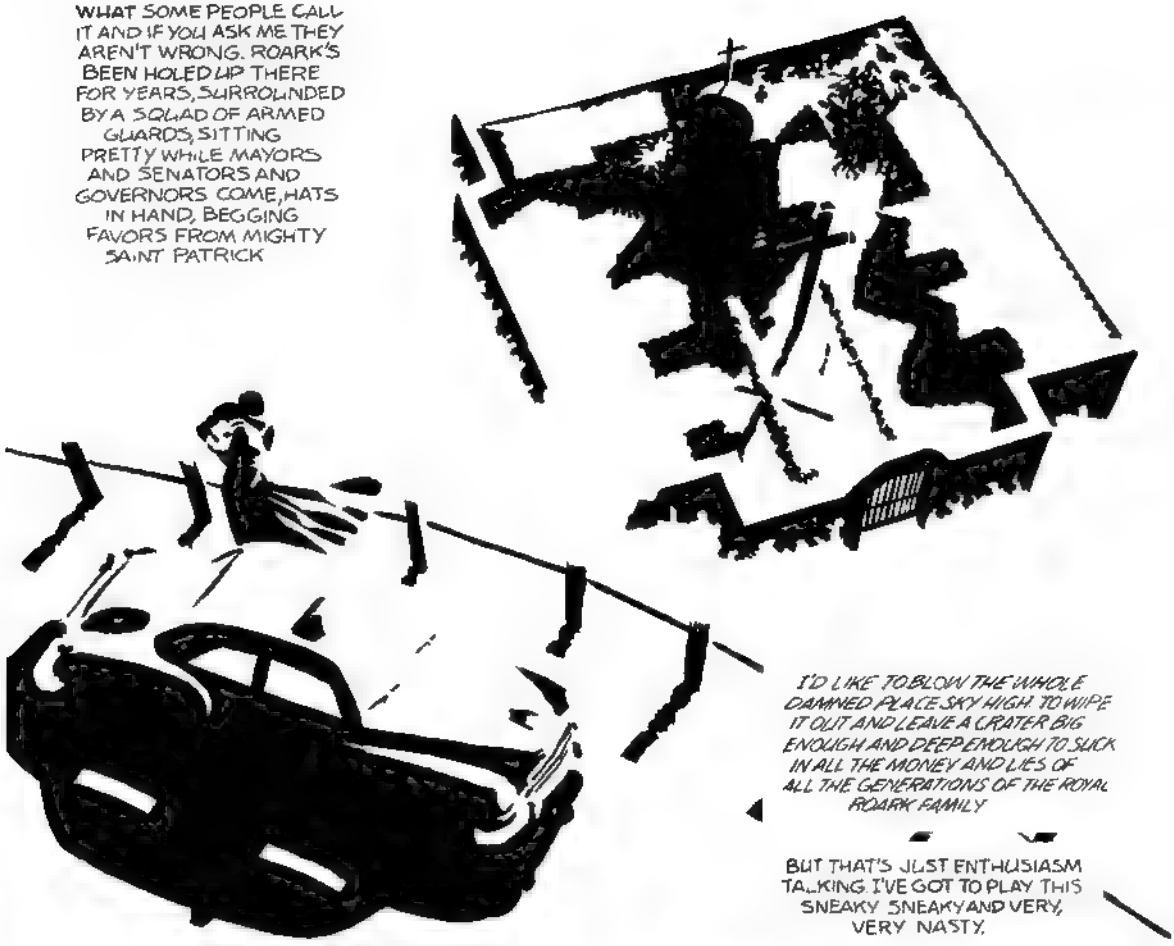
IT REALLY GETS MY GOAT WHEN GUYS ROUGH UP DAMES

SHE POPS OPEN AN ICE COLD LONG NECK. I INHALE IT. ON MY SECOND BEER I START FILLING HER IN. BY MY FIFTH ONE SHE'S UP TO SPEED.
WHILE SHE'S PATCHING ME UP NANCY RESTS MY HAND ON HER THIGH AND IT'S SOFT AND WARM BUT THAT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS, AND IT WOULDN'T BUG ME LIKE IT DOES IF I DIDN'T FEEL SO DAMNED ALIVE
...SO WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO WITH HER?
SHE'LL COME AROUND IN A FEW HOURS, YOU TELL HER EVERYTHING'S OKAY BUT SHE HAS TO HAUL ON OUT OF TOWN SHE COULD GET KILLED IF SHE DOESN'T.

I'LL TAKE HER TO THE AIRPORT MYSELF
=HRP=
NO, THAT'S NO GOOD. THEY MIGHT HAVE IT WATCHED. YOUR BEST BET IS TO DRIVE HER ALL THE WAY TO SACRED OAKS PUT HER ON A PLANE THERE SHE'LL KICK UP A FUSS BUT TELL HER I SAID SHE OWES ME ONE. IT'S NOT TRUE BUT SHE'LL BELIEVE IT.
SHE SHOULD BE OKAY. THERE'S NO WAY THEY'LL CONNECT HER TO ME BUT ANYBODY WHO'S HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH GOLD E IS BOUND TO CATCH HEAT IN A BIG WAY SO IT'S BETTER IF SHE'S GONE WHEN THEY COME CALLING
=HRP=
KEFF
WHAT ABOUT YOU? ARE YOU LEAVING TOWN?
HELL, NO. I LIKE IT HERE
=HRP=
FIRST I WALK TWENTY BLOCKS WEST. THEY'LL BE FOLLOWING MY TRAIL BACKWARDS AND I DON'T WANT IT LEADING TO NANCY
THEN I HOTWIRE A PARKED CAB AND STAY UNDER THE SPEED LIMITS, SO AS NOT TO GET ANY ATTENTION. THIS'D BE A DUMB TIME TO GET PULLED OVER
THE WIND IS WARM ON MY FACE AND EVERYTHING'S SIMPLE AND CLEAR. I CAN'T HELP SMILING

THE *MISSION.*

"FORTRESS ROARK" IS WHAT SOME PEOPLE CALL IT AND IF YOU ASK ME THEY AREN'T WRONG. ROARK'S BEEN HOLED UP THERE FOR YEARS, SURROUNDED BY A SQUAD OF ARMED GUARDS, SITTING PRETTY WHILE MAYORS AND SENATORS AND GOVERNORS COME, HATS IN HAND, BEGGING FAVORS FROM MIGHTY SAINT PATRICK



I'D LIKE TO BLOW THE WHOLE DAMNED PLACE SKY HIGH TO WIPE IT OUT AND LEAVE A CRATER BIG ENOUGH AND DEEP ENOUGH TO SUCK IN ALL THE MONEY AND LIES OF ALL THE GENERATIONS OF THE ROYAL ROARK FAMILY

BUT THAT'S JUST ENTHUSIASM TALKING I'VE GOT TO PLAY THIS SNEAKY SNEAKY AND VERY, VERY NASTY.

GUARDS, HELL. THESE BUMS ARE A DEATH SQUAD-- FROM THE SAME BUNCH WHAT KILLED LUCILLE. SO THERE'S NO REASON AT ALL TO BE NICE ABOUT THIS
CORPORAL RIVERA, CHECKING IN. QUIET AS A GRAVE, HERE. NO SIGN OF TARGET. OVER
WE COPY, CORPORAL. STAY ON YOUR TOES. CENTRAL OUT
SLEEP TIGHT, CORPORAL RIVERA.

HUFF
WHAT THE HELL--
NO--
OH, YEAH.

HUGGN

PLUNT
A FEW MORE GO DOWN, WITHOUT MUCH TROUBLE.
GAA
CHOP

FINALLY
ROARK
PATRICK HENRY ROARK.
HNH?
KEVIN?
WELL, KIND OF.
WHAT'S LEFT OF HIM, ANYWAYS. THE DOG ATE THE REST.
DON'T SCREAM OR I'LL PLUG YOU.

I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND MY SAYING IT, BUT YOU'RE ONE HECK OF LOT SMALLER THAN I THOUGHT YOU'D BE. I MEAN, YOU ARE REALLY LITTLE.
...OH, GOD!
YOU MONSTER! YOU MONSTER!
AT LEAST I DON'T GO AROUND EATING PEOPLE.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND HIM! YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HIM!
...YOU PROBABLY THINK HE COULDN'T TALK, DON'T YOU?
YOU'RE WRONG ABOUT THAT. HE HAD A VOICE LIKE AN ANGEL.
BUT HE SPOKE ONLY TO ME. ONLY TO ME.
AND NOW HE'S DEAD-- AND ALL BECAUSE OF ONE STUPID WHORE!
HER NAME WAS GOLDIE AND IT'S NOT A REAL GOOD IDEA FOR YOU TO TALK ABOUT HER THAT WAY WHILE I'M AROUND. JUST GIVE WITH THE SCOOP. THE WHOLE STORY. IF YOU DON'T I'LL START WITH YOUR FINGERS AND YOU'LL TALK ANYWAY.
...HE WAS JUST A BOY WHEN HE FIRST CAME TO ME--AND I WAS JUST A PRIEST HE CAME TO GIVE CONFESSION...
...HE WAS A TORTURED SOUL TORMENTED BY GUILT.
BUT THE EATING--IT FILLED HIM WITH WHITE LIGHT--WITH LOVE FOR EVERY LIVING THING. TEARFUL, HE SWORE TO ME THAT HE FELT THE TOUCH OF GOD ALMIGHTY!

AT FIRST, I THOUGHT HE WAS INSANE. I TRIED TO COUNSEL HIM TO CONTROL HIM
BUT, AS YEARS PASSED, KEVIN'S VOICE GREW RICHER, DEEPER, MORE CERTAIN--UNTIL IT FILLED ME WITH PLEASURE, JUST TO HEAR HIM SPEAK... JUST TO SHARE IN HIS ECSTACY...
...IN TIME, I BEGAN TO ENVY HIM THE VOICE WAS NO LONGER ENOUGH I COULD NO LONGER STAND TO THE SIDE, WHILE HE TOUCHED HEAVEN
DON'T LOOK AT ME THAT WAY. YOU DON'T KNOW YOU JUST DON'T KNOW
I KNOW IT'S PRETTY DAMN WEIRD TO EAT PEOPLE.
HE DIDN'T JUST EAT THEIR BODIES, YOU PIG! HE ATE THEIR SOULS! HE LOVED THEM IN A WAY THAT WAS ABSOLUTE AND CLEAN AND PERFECT!
AND YOU JOINED IN
YES... OH, YES..
THE WOMEN WERE NOTHING WHORES. NOBODY MISSED THEM NOBODY CARED. AND THEN THAT ONE GIRL--YOUR GOLDIE--ALMOST RUINED EVERYTHING!
SHE MUST HAVE SUSPECTED SOMETHING, AFTER THE FIRST FEW GIRLS. PERHAPS SHE SAW ONE OF THEM GETTING INTO MY LIMOUSINE
..SHE FOLLOWED US

KEVIN WAS...ENGROSSED, WHEN SHE FOUND US. SHE MADE IT TO HER CAR AND ESCAPED.
SHE STAYED IN PUBLIC PLACES. THEN WITH YOU.
YOU WERE SO *CONVENIENT* *NOBODY* WOULD BELIEVE A THUG LIKE YOU. YOU'D BROKEN A MAN'S *JAW* THAT SAME *NIGHT*
KEVIN KILLED HER. I ORDERED THE POLICE IN FOR YOU.
BUT *YOU*--YOU WOULDN'T BE *CAUGHT*--AND YOU WOULDN'T *STOP*--
--AND NOW KEVIN IS DEAD AND YOU'RE HERE TO KILL ME
WELL THAT GIVE YOU SATISFACTION, MY SON? KILLING A HELPLESS OLD MAN?
THE KILLING, NO NO SATISFACTION. BUT EVERYTHING UP UNTIL THE KILLING WILL BE A GAS
YOU CAN SCREAM NOW IF YOU WANT TO

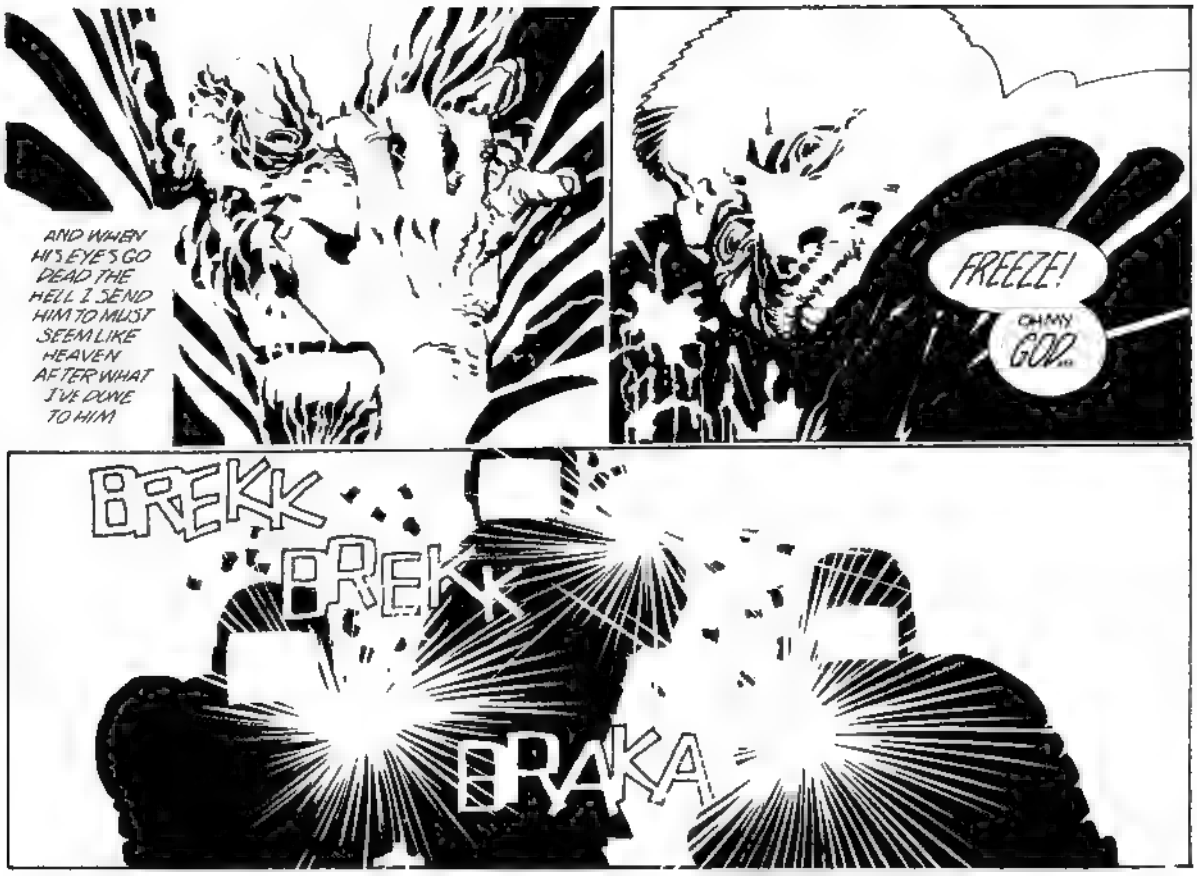
IT'S BEAUTIFUL, GOLDIE IT'S PERFECT. IT'S JUST LIKE I PROMISED ONLY BETTER.

KEVIN WAS DAMN FRUSTRATING BUT ROARK'S A PURE JOY

IT'S NOT QUICK OR QUIET LIKE IT WAS WITH YOU. NO, IT'S LOUD AND NASTY, MY KIND OF KILL.

I STARE THE BASTARD IN THE FACE AND I LAUGH AS HE SCREAMS TO GOD FOR MERCY AND I LAUGH HARDER WHEN HE SQUEALS LIKE A STUCK PIG AND WHEN HE WHIMPERS LIKE A BABY I'M LAUGHING SO HARD I CRY.

HE SPURTS AND GURGLES AND LIFE IS GOOD.


AND WHEN HIS EYES GO DEAD THE HELL I SEND HIM TO MUST SEEM LIKE HEAVEN AFTER WHAT I'VE DONE TO HIM
FREEZE!
OH MY GOD...
BREKK
BREKK
BRAKA

JERKS! THEY SHOULD HAVE SHOT ME IN THE HEAD--AND ENOUGH TIMES TO MAKE SURE

A FEW DAYS LATER I CLAW MY WAY OUT OF A HAZE OF ANESTHETICS. IT'S UP TO THE DOCTORS FOR NOW, THE DOCTORS AND THE REAL HARD WORKERS, THE NURSES.

IT'S STUPID. EVERYBODY KNOWS WHAT'S COMING BUT THEY GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS ANYWAY. WHAT A WASTE OF TIME

MONTHS FALL OFF THE CALENDAR WHILE I BREATHE AND EAT THROUGH TUBES AND I CAN'T EVEN WASH MYSELF OR USE A TOILET LIKE A GROWN MAN OUGHT TO

NIGHT AFTER NIGHT I WAIT FOR SOMEBODY TO COME AND FINISH ME OFF. AFTER A WHILE I REALIZE IT'S NOT GOING TO BE SO EASY AS THAT. I'M A MONKEY WRENCH STUCK IN A GREAT BIG MACHINE AND I'VE CAUSED SOME DAMAGE AND IT'LL TAKE A GOOD LONG TIME FOR THE GEARS TO GRIND ME TO POWDER

I'M ON MY FEET FOR ABOUT TEN MINUTES BEFORE THE COPS KICK THEM OUT FROM UNDER ME. THEY DON'T ASK ME ANY QUESTIONS. THEY JUST KEEP KNOCKING THE CRAP OUT OF ME AND WAVING A CONFESSION IN MY FACE

AND I KEEP SPITTING BLOOD ALL OVER IT AND LAUGHING AT HOW MANY FRESH COPIES THEY COME UP WITH

MOSTLY I DON'T FEEL THE PUNISHMENT. I'M OFF, FAR AWAY, WATCHING IT ALL GO PAST LIKE AN OLD MOVIE YOU ALREADY KNOW THE END OF

THEN ALONG COMES THIS WORMY ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY WHO TURNS THE RECORDER OFF AND SAYS IF I DON'T SIGN THEIR CONFESSION THEY'LL KILL MY MOM

I BREAK HIS ARM IN THREE PLACES AND SIGN THE CONFESSION.

FROM THEN ON IT'S THE CIRCUS EVERYBODY WANTS IT TO BE THEY NAIL ME FOR THE WORKS NOT JUST THE PEOPLE I DID KILL BUT EVEN LUCILLE AND THE GIRLS ROARK AND KEVIN ATE

AND EVEN GOLDIE

THE JUDGE IS ALL FIRE AND BRIMSTONE WHEN SHE HANDS DOWN THE SENTENCE THE CROWD EATS IT UP

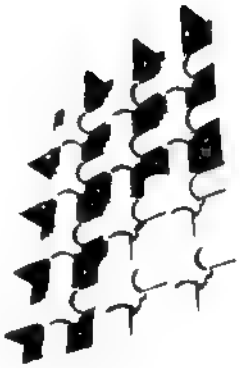
AND RIGHT NOW THEY'RE OUTSIDE, WAITING. HOLDING A VIGIL, THEY CALL IT THEY'RE HOLLERING AND PULLING SIX-PACKS OUT OF THEIR STATION WAGONS AND WISHING THEY COULD WATCH THE LYNCHING UP CLOSE THEY'LL HAVE TO SETTLE FOR WATCHING THE LIGHTS DIM

MIDNIGHT AND MY DEATH ARE ONLY A FEW HOURS AWAY WHEN I GET MY FIRST SURPRISE IN EIGHTEEN MONTHS.

MY ONLY VISITOR

THEY'VE GOT ME IN A CELL ABOUT A MILE AWAY FROM THE OTHER CONS SO I CAN HEAR HER HEELS CLICK ON THE CEMENT FLOOR FOR A LONG TIME BEFORE SHE GETS HERE

I'M READY FOR ANYTHING BUT THAT SCENT.



I'M SORRY, WENDY I GOT CONFUSED AGAIN, SEEING YOU LIKE THIS
IT'S ALL RIGHT, MARV.
YOU CAN CALL ME GOLDIE.
SHE SMELLS LIKE ANGELS OUGHT TO SMELL.
THE PERFECT WOMAN, THE GODDESS
GOLDIE
SHE SAYS HER NAME IS GOLDIE

THEY FIX ME A PRETTY DECENT STEAK FOR MY LAST MEAL. THEY EVEN THROW IN A BREW, THE FIRST I'VE HAD SINCE BACK AT NANCY'S.

THEN THEY SHAVE MY HEAD AND FIX ME WITH A RUBBER DIAPER AND GET TO IT

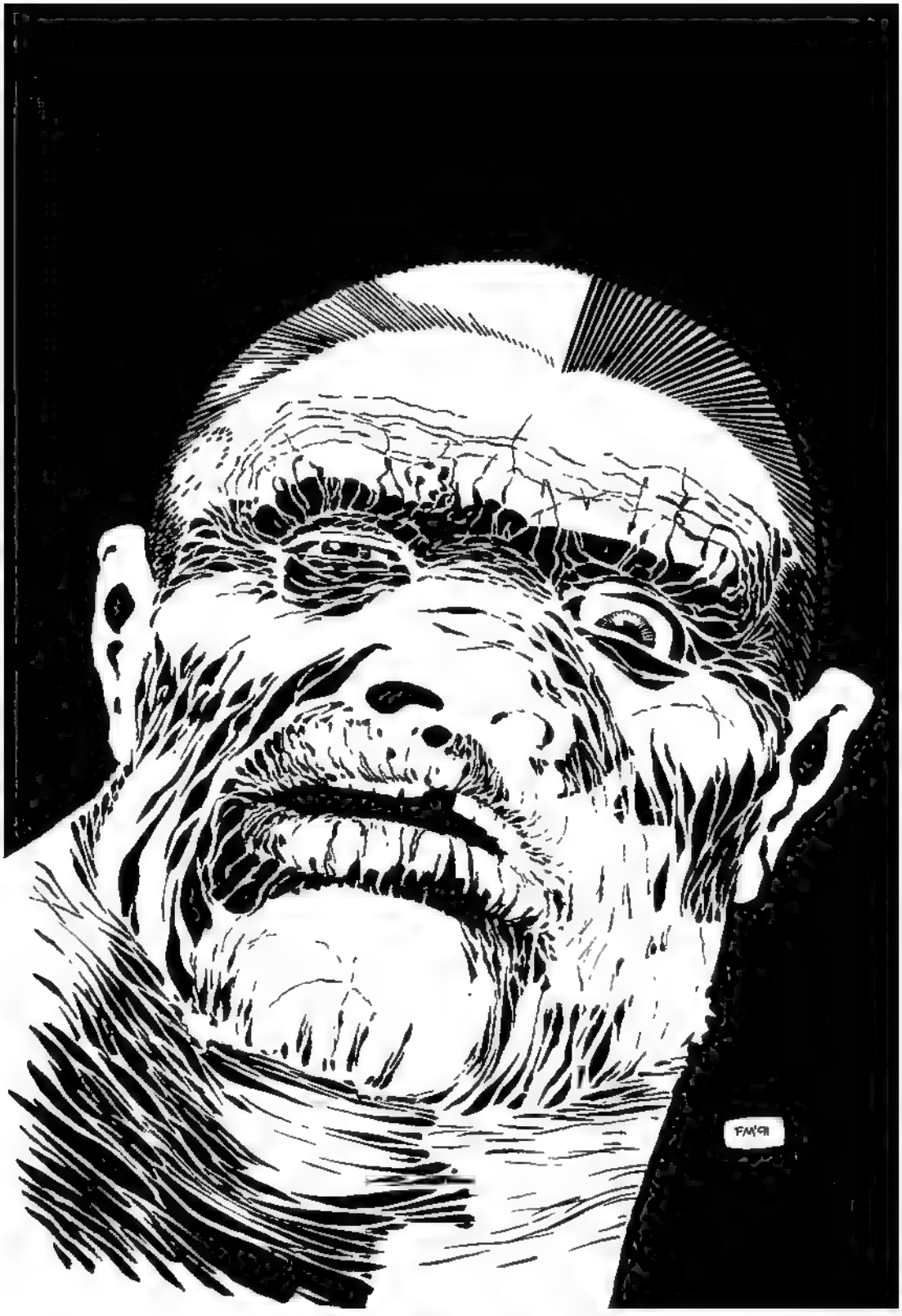
AND IT'S ABOUT DAMN TIME, IF YOU ASK ME

YEA, THOUGH I WALK THR THE VALLEY OF THE SHAD OF DEATH.
COULD YOU GET A *MOVE ON?* I HAVEN'T GOT ALL *NIGHT!*
YOU HEARD THE MAN HIT IT
YES, SIR

KEFF
HA HA HA HA
THAT THE BEST YOU CAN DO, YOU PANSIES?

THE END

THIS ONE RAN AWAY WITH ITSELF. I'd planned it as forty-eight pages, but I got carried away. It's all Marv's fault. The big lug started bossing me around. It's like that sometimes. The pages you're looking at right now feature some of the covers and publicity pieces I drew in the course of *Sin City*'s thirteen-month run in *Dark Horse Presents*. — FM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